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STRY OF EVIL

AND

A STUDY OF THE FUTURE LIFE

CHARLES WATSON MILLEN

JAN -4 1915

Miller
ZFGF

THE MINISTRY OF EVIL

with REPLIES TO CRITICS

ALSO

A STUDY OF THE FUTURE LIFE

BY

CHARLES WATSON MILLEN

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out.

SHAKESPEARE

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused.

WORDSWORTH

BOSTON
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1913

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TO

THE TEARS THAT HAVE REFLECTED RAINBOWS,
THE LOSSES FOUND TO BE TREASURES,
THE MISFORTUNES REVEALED AS BLESSINGS,
THE CROSSES THAT HAVE HID THEIR CROWNS,
THE ENEMIES THAT BLINDLY COMPELLED TO A

BETTER PATH

TO

ALL THE UNLOVING AND UNLOVED
THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

Feeling that the more or less accepted theories of evil are as incompatible with truth as they are inconsistent with each other, I have endeavored to present a view, which, to say the least, does not dishonor God's character nor contradict the Bible. I believe that the true theory of evil does not make God in any degree responsible for its existence, that it does not give Satan a free hand in the moral disturbance of God's universe, and that it does not imply the permanence of evil either in active or passive form.

In the creation of high orders of beings endowed with free will, the possibility of evil becomes necessary. The power of free choice implies both good and evil as possible. And this is as true of God as it is of His moral creatures, for He is free. He cannot confer a power which He does not possess.* [1]

The will, or power of free choice, in each free agent is one faculty. Good and evil, there-

* The figures found in connection with "Preface" and poem refer to criticisms and answers correspondingly numbered under "Replies to Critics."

fore, proceed from the same source. God expresses that power for righteousness and thus is the personification of goodness. The being whom He made nearest to Him, the one most like Him, probably the first of His moral creatures and head of angelic hosts, endowed with marvelous and irrevocable powers, expresses, probably not from the beginning and possibly not forever, his will in unrighteousness, and therefore is the embodiment and father of evil.

According to some of our mental philosophers, the will in man acts for good or evil in conformity with the motives which affect it. But does it not act, rather, according as it is acted upon by the primary representatives of good and evil, and often without the weighing of motives in any conscious degree? Explaining the cause of her fall, Eve said: "Satan beguiled me and I did eat." When Ananias deceived as to the price for which he sold a piece of land, Jesus said: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" So, also, it was Satan who tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Hence the language of David's confession of his great offense is suitable to every acknowledgment of sin: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done evil in Thy sight." We are good or evil as our will yields to the will of God or of Satan. Trench, in his "Study of Words," says: "To find guilt in a

man is to find that he has been beguiled by the devil,—'*instigante diabolo*,' as it is inserted in all indictments for murder, the forms of which come down to us from a time when men were not ashamed of tracing evil to his inspiration."

While God's nature requires Him to do all in His power, consistent with the perfect freedom of the subject, to prevent evil choice, yet, in the contingency of its occurrence, it is necessary for God to permit evil to such extent as may fully demonstrate the free agency of the subject, but not to the extent of destroying His moral government. Perfect free agency is compatible with supreme moral sovereignty.[2]

God's nature also requires Him mercifully to interpose in the sinner's behalf and to make evil contribute to His own glory and the sinner's profit in the highest possible degree. This He does by giving to evil, in the abstract and in its concrete forms, an adequate ministry through the gift of His Son. He is justified in making possible, by the creation of free beings, the evil which He can turn to infinite advantage both to Himself and to them, especially if it be His purpose to finally overcome it.

In presenting the benefits which come through evil, therefore, we are not commending evil, but glorifying God, who overrules and uses it for good. To the creature belongs all the responsibility for the introduction of evil into the uni-

verse, while to the Creator belongs all the credit for its having become a blessing therein.

We hold that God cannot create or choose evil; but when once introduced, He may use evil against evil and in a sense make evils, so called, as He did when by His curse He transformed the agreeable and intelligent serpent who conversed with Eve into the vile reptile that now lurks in hidden places and lures or stealthily strikes his unsuspecting prey. It was the serpent of His creation, not the reptile of His curse, that God pronounced good.

Mosquitoes that annoy, caterpillars that nest in the trees and destroy their foliage, army worms that devour the growing crops,—all the tormenting and destructive vermin known as pests,—are evils, but in service, and God made them only as He made "thorns and thistles"—the representative evil products of the earth while under His curse. They form no part of His original creation. They minister to our discipline in the contention and war which we are compelled to wage against them. And so we should, perhaps, thank God for them and their very vexing proclivities.

Though the earth would not have been cursed but for man's fall, yet the curse has relation mainly to the future. It may show to man, earth's chief inhabitant, the blighting character of sin and remind him of that greatest pos-

sible cataclysm which involved him so deeply, but as the earth could not participate in the moral tragedy of Eden beyond being the passive scene of it, it could not be cursed on its own account. The curse of the earth was a part of the curse pronounced upon man and was so full of hope that in his changed moral relations and conditions it became the occasion of his greatest blessing. Man should sweat, but he should eat; he should labor, but his labor should find ample reward; he should meet evil, but he should overcome it—never again should evil be his master, but evermore his servant; he should suffer, but not without profit, and through it his seed should be multiplied, from which should come his Divine Redeemer—the Savior of all men, especially of them that believe. God did not curse the earth in anger for man's sin, but in love for man's sake; it was not for man's punishment, but for his development.

Is evil needful in the universe? God has created moral beings, angelic and human, and both have fallen. Is evil needful in heaven as in earth, for angels as for men? Does God need it for the accomplishment of His highest purposes? Surely God uses it and through it opens in Himself and in every one of His intelligent creatures the fountains of sympathy and healing that shall flow perpetually.[3]

"Replies to Critics," forming a considerable part of this volume, will be regarded by many as more valuable than the poem, an abstract of which has received the consideration of the best Biblical scholarship available. While some have given it unqualified commendation, it has presented to others difficulties and objections which they have kindly and courteously stated, meriting my highest appreciation and placing me under a welcome debt of obligation. My replies have been made in no spirit of controversy, but of loyalty to seeming truth. The Scripture passages, to which have been given a new interpretation and application, are worthy of most careful study. False views, whatever their antiquity or endorsement, contribute no advantage, and every error corrected here can do no less than to save us from disappointment hereafter.

"A Study of the Future Life" is unique in its character and original in its conclusions. It is not a speculation. It is not a revamp of any ism or theory. It is a new conception based upon reason, resemblance and Revelation. It casts a modifying light upon many teachings of the Church and gives a new and beautiful meaning to many texts of Scripture. It will interest even where it may not convince. Be-

lieving that it will yet be the generally accepted doctrine of the future life, I am glad to be its author.

The birth of this book has been in the valley of Baca, secluded, shadowy, tearful; yet sounding no note of gloom, it reveals God as always on the throne and always the God of love. Its picture of the fair morning of creation invaded by elements that threaten confusion and universal wreck, dissolves into another of all-embracing peace and perfect harmony, the sun shining in splendor and not a cloud in all the sky. I send it forth with the earnest hope that it will stimulate thought, improve faith, encourage contentment, help to a still clearer statement of the problem of evil, and inspire the most grateful view of the gracious character and righteous government of God.

C. W. M.

THE MINISTRY OF EVIL

PRELUDE

When angels sing, they voice their joy,—
No minor strains their harps employ;
Creation's glories wake their song
That worlds reëcho and prolong,
Distilling into tuneful ears
The mystic music of the spheres;
The Savior's birth in glad refrain
They chant o'er Bethlehem's hallowed plain;
For each poor sinner's contrite tears
Their loud hosannas Heaven hears.

And poets angels are, who sing
Of whom and what they love; they bring
Bright flowers of speech and rarest gems
Of thought to form rich diadems
Wherewith to deck with deftest art
And crown fond objects of their heart.

They sing their joys. No flames of hate,
No sorrows inarticulate,
No shrouded grief, or pain, or crime,
Should poet's fancy weave in rhyme.

They sing of art; of home and friends;
And Nature's ample book extends

The list of themes all poets love
In earth below and stars above.

They sing of beauty, virtue, grace,
And paint the joys of that dear place
Where holy ranks of seraphs sing
And pay pure worship to their King;
Where saints in radiant splendor shine,
Reflecting glory all divine;
Where poets, too, whose loves are pure,
Their rich reward will find secure.

Sing on, ye bards; the world needs song;
Enough of grief; enough of wrong.
Sweet comfort give; let all your lays
Bring hope of brighter, better days,
And every strain, like balsam, heal
The wounds our hearts would fain conceal.

God's messengers mankind to bless,
Increase the sum of happiness;
The truth make clear in spite of creed;
True love incarnate in the deed;
Give hope that shines when stars fade out;
Give faith that conquers death and doubt;
Heaven's chalice, not fine fancies, pour
To save men now and evermore.

EVIL IN THE WORLD AND ITS MINISTRY THERE

In this perplexing, changeful life
Evil and good are strangely blent;
In greatest ill some good is found,
With greatest good some ill is sent.

The tempest, fiendlike in its rage,
To fields and homes sad havoc brings,
Yet, like an angel, freights away
Contagion foul on lustral wings.

The summer sun that pours his beams
To light the world, give life and joys,
Augments the toiler's heavy task,
And often feeble life destroys.

The breath that fans the brow of care
May soon in wild tornado blow;
The shower that quenches nature's thirst
In hurtling flood may madly flow.

The hated thing we get may bless,
Our greatest loss may prove a gain;
Fond Friendship's tender hand may smite,
The fount of knowledge issue pain.

The wholesome law by evil lives,
Ambition's crown is won by cost,
To trial Virtue owes a debt,
And heaven is gained through Eden lost.

Strange paradox—the human heart!
High purpose lives with base desire,
And worship's flame is oft obscured
By noxious fumes of passion's fire.

Evil exists—within, without—
Ubiquitous as light or air;
Nor from its power is there escape,
Its challenge meets us everywhere.

Into this fair and virgin world
The subtle serpent had brought sin
If, made with sense of right and wrong,
A moral creature he had been.

Endowed with freedom, man brings sin,
And sin hath need of tearful woes;
Thus evil through the world's long age
A current all diffusive flows.

It burdens beast and bird and bee,
Affects the land and billowy main,
Imbues the air, nor spares the light;
The whole creation groans in pain.

And yet not profitless this stream,
For God makes use of good and ill;
By His permission evil lives,
And what can countervail His will? [4] *

God loves not ill nor ill ordains;
He wills not ill nor ill creates;
He still forbids and punishes,
Yet turns to use, the ill He hates.

'Tis true that God the law ordains,—
Each seed its own shall e'er repeat;
Who sows to flesh must gather chaff,
Who sows to spirit garners wheat.

Yet e'en the whirlwind's chaff shall serve
To feed desire to conquer ill;
Through struggle Virtue mounts her throne
According to God's perfect will.

We own God's right to grant free choice,
Though freedom evil may purvey;
True love implies the power to hate,
Obedience, power to disobey.

The power inheres, but not the right,
To choose the wrong where will is free,
For conscience lives, and sternest law
Forbids the choice with penalty.

* The figures found in connection with "Preface" and poem, refer to criticisms and answers correspondingly numbered under "Replies to Critics."

Perverted use of powers bestowed
Is not the generous Giver's blame,
But his who holds the sacred trust,
And he must bear the guilt and shame.

God wills that free man's will shall be,
But not the evil it projects;
He must permit the free will's choice,
Though 'gainst His will that will elects.

Free agency has yet its zone,
Within a sovereign realm it lies;
All evil bounded God compels
To swell His praise through earth and skies.[5]

To human fall is closely joined
Love's intervention all divine;
While one o'er earth deep shadows casts,
The other like the sun doth shine.

Man's fall was into clearer light,—
With opened eyes as God he stood;
By knowing ill he also knew
The beauty, power, and worth of good.[6]

Man's fall was into greater strength,—
From Eden's enervating bower
He went with virile brain and thews
To win a world with lordly power.[7] [8]

Man's fall was forward into hope
That springs eternal in the breast,
Adorns each cloud with golden fringe,
And pledges heaven's untroubled rest.[9]

Fair Modesty therein finds birth,—
Suave charm is seen in charms concealed,
And honored is Humility
In beauty's artless blush revealed.[10]

Can wardrobe without cloth be made,
Or thread and needles to sustain?
Ay, leaves are deftly sewed and formed,
For genius kindles in the brain.

The procreative functions held
Erstwhile unconscious, now awake;
Fond parentage desired, each home
Shall hence another Eden make.

In her farewell to Paradise,
Eve could lament to leave sweet flower,
Fair fount, loved walk, and grateful shade,
But not embellished nuptial bower.[11]

The law man knew was that of works,—
Do this and live; do that and die;
The higher law of love appears
When evil calls it from the sky.

Yet not to man is credit due
For opening love's sweet mystery;
The starry choirs and angels sing—
Christ is the key of history.

Not one would claim that man foresaw
Results, e'en in the least degree,
When putting forth his hand, he took
The fruit of that forbidden tree.

One only law to him was given,—
Of these trees eat, from that refrain;
No hint of tempter he received,
Nor knew he aught of death or pain.

He suffered not from noonday sun,
Nor felt the chill of dew or rain,
And when God's hand removed a rib
In sleep profound, he knew no pain.

Of evil capable he was,
But not to evil choice inclined;
All from without temptation came,
Not his the bent his offspring find.

Like simple child he disobeyed,
Nor good nor evil did he know;
He knew not what temptation was;
Mindless was he of weal or woe.

While good and evil were unknown,
No promise happy hope could wake,
Nor threat of pending wrath and doom
With fear the placid bosom shake.[12]

Nor do we palliate his guilt
With studied show of mere pretense
When we recall the mercy shown
To those who plead "the first offense."

And when the law was thus transgressed,
The strict requital fed love's flame;
A higher type of man God wills,
And greater glory to His name.[13]

Uprightness, more than innocence,
Obedience true of virtue born,
And loyal love with liberty,
Must now man's character adorn.

God has for him a higher thought
Than roseate morning's lavish dower;
High noon's estate and heaven's pure bliss
Surpass the joys of Eden's bower.

Creation, vast and marvelous,
Must yield to glory far above,—
Through sin's dark portals Jesus comes
And founds a kingdom ruled by love.

In all God's works and words and ways,
One purpose high He executes,—
That He may show Himself as God
In all His wondrous attributes.

Worlds must exist, for God has power;
Design must show, for God is wise;
And shall not evil contrast good
To give God's love full exercise?

To show Himself, to perfect man,
God uses what He could not make,—
A hostile force, opposing will,
And thirst His pity springs to slake.

God's finished work, called "very good,"
No blemish saw nor swift decay,
No noxious weed the earth produced,
Nor pain nor pest beset man's way.

As Science, skilled in Nature's laws,
Evolves new forms in flowers and fruits,
So fecund earth, for man's "sake" cursed,
To raid and scourge brings fresh recruits.

What God created and approved
Commands our love and guardian care;
The serpent's seed demands our hate,
Though "bruised heel" be ours to bear.

The enemy the tares has sown;
Yet noisome, hurtful, deadly things
God uses for our discipline,
And thus by them a blessing brings.

Slight is the hurt, the blessing great,
Of all who toil beneath the curse
Which shines so gemmed with promise bright,
It gilds with hope the universe.[14]

When shown with its antithesis,
The truth in strongest light appears;
How brief is man's mortality
Compared with God's eternal years.

Our knowledge is by contrasts gained,—
We know the light because of shade;
Our joys we prize, for grief is felt
When in the grave our hopes are laid.

If nothing called forth pity's tears;
If none were weak, or poor, or lone;
If all were right and nothing wrong,
The softest heart would turn to stone.[15]

What use were power where naught resists,
Or pity where is no distress,
Or pardon where no wrong is done,
Or patience where no foes oppress?

Now God is love, His followers kind,
The sinner free forgiveness knows,
Compassion shares Misfortune's pain,
And mercy like a river flows.

'Tis needful that offenses come,
Was uttered by the Master's voice;
Resistance lends to Effort aid,
But woe to him who sins from choice.

"It must needs be." How kind those words;
Some treacherous cloud our eyes may veil;
We know in part; our will is weak;
The best and strongest sometimes fail.

God's curse imposed now works sin's cure;
Sore trials wake man's moral sense;
Afflictions chasten spirits proud,
And lead to humble penitence.

Though willful sinners oft require
Keen pain—the law's corrective rod—
Yet sometimes sufferings are sent
To manifest the works of God.

And thus God's best may suffer most,
Though sin and sorrow are akin;
Were upright Job, the man born blind,
And Jesus, sufferers for their sin?

As punishment, or discipline,
Or that His glory God may show,
We sorely suffer, nor see why,
Nor is it needful we should know.

Enough if ministry severe
Its noble purpose shall secure
And make this world a safer place
Than Adam found in Eden pure.

Whence comes the fullness of the stream
In blessings to the thirsty vale?
It nursed the breast of mountain cloud,
Borne thence and torn by fiercest gale.

And whence this peace, serene and deep,
That makes life's dirge a joyful psalm?
God's strong hand smote my wayward heart,
Then gently poured sweet Gilead's balm.

Between the oyster and its shell
A grain of sand produces pain;
Encisted there, what alchemy
Can turn mute suffering into gain?

Concentric folds of membrane laid—
Tears calcified—are Nature's means
To heal the wound and form a pearl
To deck the coronet of queens.

Howe'er benign, we cannot pray
For sickness, poverty, or grief;
Nor should we plead for what may harm—
For riches, fame, or pain's relief.

"If it be possible, O God,
Let this most bitter cup pass by;
Yet not my will, but Thine be done."
Thus Jesus prayed; "Amen," we sigh.

If I in my Gethsemane
Can breathe the prayer of God's dear Son,
Then I may face my Calvary
And cry—"My Lord and I are one."

The hordes of ill, the hosts of good,
About us press with promise fair;
Perchance the good is blindly spurned
And ill embraced with eager care.

We dare not choose, we do not know,
What cup to drink, what voice believe;
We only know our thirst is great
And sweetest draughts may most deceive.[16]

For virtue's sake God gives His Jobs
And Peters into Satan's hands;
Nor could His Christ the trial shun;
Who falls, yet rises, truly stands.

Thou, Who the cruel wine press trod
In sad Gethsemane alone,
Who captive led Captivity,
And didst for all our sins atone;

Thou, Who for sifted Peter prayed
He might the test of faith endure,
Then cast on him a timely look—
The look that saved—love's strongest lure;—

Turn, look on us, ere faith quite fails;
Incline our hearts to things above,
To take what comes and lean on God,
For ALL works good to them that love.

INTERLUDE

God in His wisdom made the sun,
With planets in his train,
And countless suns and systems still
Which realms of space contain.

In wisdom God hung out the moon
And did her course command,
And not amiss He flung the stars
From His Almighty hand.

To all He gave important work,
Assigned them power and place,
Prescribed their orbit's wondrous path,
And timed their tireless race.

Precision all their movements marks,
They all true balance keep,
Their inclinations are exact
As through deep space they sweep.

Therefore the grateful seasons turn,
Hence follow night and day,
So ebb and flow the ocean's tides;
For WORLDS God's law obey.

. . . .

See how the face of nature fair
God's limning doth forever bear;
His purpose grand in all is seen—
In ocean's surge and landscape's sheen,
In dew-gemmed grass and blooming flowers,
In rocks and glades, and oak that towers
Umbrageous over vale and hill,
Where nature freely works her will.
The seed has germs to reproduce
Its kind in numbers most profuse,
And thus the husbandman well knows
The source from which rich harvest grows.

The birds that chirp their modest lays
Or loudly sing their Maker's praise;
The beasts that toil, or lurk in lair;
E'en insects buzzing through the air;
Reptiles that slink from glance of men;
The croakers of the dismal fen;
And finny tribes that fill the deep;—
To instinct true, their place all keep,
And be their mission good or ill,
They ne'er transgress their Maker's will.
This lesson, then, we learn with awe—
All NATURE keeps God's perfect law.

. . . .

And can our God less mindful be
Of those designed eternally
His image pure to bear?

Has he no work, no place, no plan
For noble, regal, godlike man,
  Who may His glory share?

Where'er we look this truth is taught—
Man lives in God's divinest thought,
  Has in His plans high place.
As lord of all the world below,
His work is great as angels know,—
  O happy human race.

Yet man alone, with power to say,
"I will," "I will not," breaks away
  And yields to passions base;
His lofty lineage he belies
And spurns the love no good denies,—
  Ah, wretched human race.

A planet from its orbit hurled
By force centrifugal—a world
  Enwrapped in doleful gloom—
Is emblem of the fallen man
Whose will would thwart his Maker's plan
  And rush him on to doom.

But grace shall melt the hardest heart,
And balm divine shall cure the smart
  Of sin's malignant sores.
The Son of God for man hath died;
" 'Tis finished," on the cross He cried;
  The Cross lost man restores.

Great God, we fall before Thy face
And glad receive Thy saving grace,
  So fully, freely given.
What joy, what ecstasy, what bliss
When Thou from sin the soul dost kiss;
  The night of storm is riven.

EVIL IN HEAVEN AND ITS SUBJECTION EVERYWHERE

Evil in heaven! Amazing fact,
That angels left their pure estate!
How fell the first, the chief, the prince?
What world could lure a soul so great?

Endowed with power, enrobed in light,
His headship angels glad to own,
Too proud to render service high,
He craved a kingdom, sought a throne.

Did Lucifer, so near to God,
Bright sun of heaven's glorious morn,
Involve by sin the hosts he led
As Adam did his race unborn?

The facts we know would seem to point
To parent, offspring, kindred all;
One law for every living thing;
"Seed of its kind" for great and small.

When God would send His Son to earth,
He must be parented like man;
As baby born in Joseph's home
His wondrous life on earth began.

Or were angelic beings made
Each one distinct and separate,
No kinship felt, alone to hold
Or leave at will his pure estate?

Enough to know one angel proud,
With ranks of pliant satellites,
Dared challenge God's supremacy
And disavow His sacred rights.

The rebel hosts for conflict form
And horrid war in heaven they wage;
There overcome, to earth they haste
And pour on man their vengeful rage.

But man, though like the angels free,
Did not through vain ambition fall;
The supple serpent Satan used,
Of creatures craftiest of all,

The serpent cursed beyond all hope,
The human pair from Eden sent.
Oh, why was Satan not rebuked
Unless his sway some service meant?

Indeed, in heaven he still appeared,
In council met with sons of God,
And brought report of what he learned,
As up and down the earth he trod.

To angels fallen into sin
His tender mercy God reveals;
Methinks redemption they are given,
Nor one in vain to Him appeals.

Cannot God's Son the angels save
And heaven's righteous law maintain,
Since from foundation of the world
The precious Lamb of God was slain?

The voice the human flock obey
The angels know who Christ's love share;
Them He must bring His "other sheep"
To form one fold, one Shepherd's care.

As mercy moral law implies,
And finite powers may mercy plead,
So surely God must find a way
To meet a sinning angel's need.[17]

When Jesus came in human flesh,
Thus lower made than Seraphim,
God gave command throughout His worlds—
"Let all the angels worship Him."

Who disobeyed this righteous test,
E'en tempting Jesus to rebel,
Bore guilt God's justice could not brook,
And swift from heaven like lightning fell.

By blood of Lamb, o'ercome, cast out,
To earth confined, let heaven rejoice;
Our brethren there no more shall hear
The serpent's false, accusing voice.

Woe for the earth and for the sea!
To them the devil has come down;
As prince he moves the powers of air,
As this world's god he wears the crown.

The fabled Harpies, Furies, Fates,
Producing storms and dire events,
Were mystic hints of Satan's power
In nature's active elements.

He lays on men infirmities
For which, alas, no cure is found;
The woman bent and bowed Christ healed,
Lo, eighteen years had Satan bound.

His power is great, his time is short,
He lays his lures on every hand,
With skill provides what weakness wants;
Ah, who against his wiles can stand?

God is supreme; He won in heaven
When Michael 'gainst the dragon fought;
And Christ, in pure humanity,
O'er Satan splendid triumph wrought.

A moral government involves
A power supreme o'er subjects free,
And published law, adapted, just,
Whose sanctions weigh eternally.

Jehovah reigns, does not coerce,
Constrains by love and wisdom's voice,
Provides fair field, respects free will;
Oh, therefore, let the earth rejoice.

Evil abounds, but never rules,
It still contends, but must retreat.
While claiming all, it loses all,
And leaves the record of defeat.

The furnace heated seven fold
Receives the Hebrew children bound,
But fire their fetters only burns,
For there the Son of God is found.

In our dear Elder Brother's name,
As more than conquerors we sing;
The boasting Grave no victory claims;
And vaunting Death has lost his sting.

All time, all things,—the thick events
That crowd the earth or heavens above,—
All words and works, all joys and tears,
Are servants of the God we love.

E'en Satan is God's minister,
And, though unwilling, serves Him well,
Else God would banish him from earth,
And justly cast him down to hell.

To hell? Ah, not to dark despair;
Sane law blest privilege provides;
Unchanging goodness e'er invites;
Fair Hope, like Faith and Love, abides.

"Until he finds,"—oh, welcome words—
The shepherd seeks the sheep astray;
"Until she finds" the prized lost coin,
The woman's search knows no delay.

And thus in parable Christ shows
How long He will His grace declare,
"Until He finds," nor "wings of morn,"
Nor "bed in hell" defeats His care.

Probation is a myth, as taught;
Can fickle choice fix changeless fate?
With life forever under law,
No soul shall hopeless cry, "Too late."

Too late to gather golden store,
Too late Ambition's crown to win,
Too late to use lost privilege,—
But ne'er too late to cease from sin.[18]

"I am the door; if any man
Shall ope the door, I will come in,"
No time lock on this promise sure,
"I will come in and save from sin."

One, only one condition given,
Though men another oft attach,
Sweet fellowship is found whene'er
Faith's fingers reach the ready latch.

When thus we see Thee, loving Lord,
Our dull delay we deep deplore,
And rise and press with eager haste
To open wide the welcome door.

A wasted spring lean harvest brings,
And age bemoans a youth misspent,
Neglect may bring uncovered loss,—
An everlasting punishment.

Then whence this heaven of bliss secured?
Ah, not through our forgetfulness;
Our sins behind God's back are cast
When we in Christ's dear name confess.

'Tis here or there or any place,
High heaven is found, or deepest hell;
Each is condition—bliss or woe—
Wherever moral creatures dwell.

God is the God of life, not death,
His kingdom ruleth over all;
His endless rule still signals hope;
No ear too deaf to hear His call.

Just punishment has purpose kind;
For every sinner Jesus died;
He sees the travail of His soul,
And saving all, is satisfied.

Nothing is lost; the leaf that falls,
Feeding the roots of yonder tree,
Shall climb to life in flower and fruit,
In golden summers yet to be.

The rain descends and, warmed by sun,
Returns ethereal to the skies,
There soon compressed by cooling winds,
Again it falls, again to rise.

God sees each raindrop in its rounds—
Above, below, through all the years,
And knows it still in mist or stream,
In dew gemmed flowers or flowing tears.

"Gather the fragments," Jesus said,
And thus to meanest things applied
His holy will concerning all,
And most of all for whom He died.

Ideals—prophecies of truth—
In time's ripe fullness are concrete;
To loftiest fancies Art gives form,
The dreams of Science spurn defeat.

Ideals—too good to have been,
So good they must be, soon or late,
Embrace for all this wholesome hope—
The endless, holy, blissful state.

For all mankind Christ came and died;
With thought of all He went away;
To all the Comforter He sends
To teach His truth and give it sway.

More potent now the words of Christ
Than when from His own lips they fell;
And, added truth, the "things to come,"
Yea, "all things" e'en, shall He foretell.

He knows no bounds; not "straightened" He,
But "searches all," "convinces all,"
"Shows all their sin," "commands return,"
And "mighty signs" enforce His call.

Triumphant triune God, Thy work
Complete in earth and heaven I boast.
A sinless universe must come;
My faith is in the Holy Ghost.

We know not now, though sons of God,
What we shall be when Christ appears,
When face to face Him we shall see
With sight undimmed by clouds or tears.

We see Him not with vision clear,
Else our poor dross would turn to gold;
But in the light of God's white throne
His glory bright we shall behold.

Yet not at once the full orbed view,
Nor sudden comes the wondrous change;
The law of moral life is growth,
Whatever be its realm or range.

"When He appears." Oh, glorious sight!
The worlds subdued before Him fall;
Subjected all, Himself subjects
To God the Father—"All in all."

Not once surprised nor unprepared,
Nor facing possible defeat,
God rules, and good and evil join
To make His victory complete:—

Complete; nor man nor angel lost,
Nor evil lifts defiant head;
Christ's enemies are now His friends;
E'en Death, His last grim foe, is dead.

As one who seeks the fields in spring,
Reviving nature's hope perceives,
Discovers buds of promise full,
And sweet arbutus 'neath dead leaves,

So he who loves God's word will find,
Assisted by the Spirit's breath,
Truth's radiant garb in forms effete,
And throbbing life mid husks of death.

Ah, who can say ill has no place
In realms by moral creatures trod,
Or who deny that it proclaims
The wisdom, power, and love of God?

Faith sees the universe at peace,
From evil gain, approved God's ways,[19]
All knees in humble worship bent,
And vocal every tongue with praise.[20]

A REFLECTION

Methinks the birds that never sing,
  Within their breasts have songs;
They love and mate, and show the joy
  To which all song belongs.

And birds that sing, more music have
  Than their few notes impart;
Their voiceless airs are heard by Him
  Who tunes the choiring heart.

So multitudes who lack the skill
  To form the rhythmic line,
The soul of poesy possess,
  And feel the flame divine.

And poets who most sweetly sing
  Have sweeter songs unsung,
Melodious whispers from above,
  For which there is no tongue.

God's gifts are good; enough to know
  His will His pleasure brings;
Who made and touches, gladly hears
  The harp of thousand strings.

Sublime the thrill of those mute songs
  Not tuned for stolid ears;
His life they make an epic grand
  Whose soul their cadence hears.

REPLIES TO CRITICS

REPLIES TO CRITICS.

1. *"In your Preface you say, 'The power of free choice implies both good and evil as possible. And this is as true of God as it is of His moral creatures, for He is free. He cannot confer a power which He does not possess.' Does not the President of the United States confer a power which he does not possess in his appointment of postmasters? I hold that God is not free; He cannot choose evil."*—A. E. D.

That which is morally impossible may be absolutely possible. Our claim that God is free in the absolute sense is justified by the reason assigned. If further proof is desired, it is found in the nature of goodness, which to be praiseworthy must be voluntary, just as evil to be blamed must be chosen.

The Federal Government forms, owns, and controls the whole postal system. It has made a class of postoffices appointive, and the president is the government's representative, as also is the postmaster, in the discharge of official duties. The government confers the power which it alone possesses. Its servants may come and its servants may go, but the government, as the highest expression of the sovereign people, goes on forever.

It is true that God, as God, cannot choose evil. This leads me to a position beyond that which is taken by many who deny God's absolute freedom. With God, as such, there is only the superlative degree. Good and better, as meaning less than the best, are not in His vocabulary. There are those who ask, "Why is the world as it is, when God might have made it so differently?" Leibnitz, a celebrated German philosopher, held that "God saw an infinite number of worlds before Him as possible." I hold that the infinitely perfect Being must be actuated by the perfect conception. In the creation and government of the universe He is bound by His very nature in all things to do His best. Neither suns nor planets could better serve the high purpose of their existence. Angels in their realm are the complete expression of God's perfect ideal concerning them. Man, crowned with freedom, and this world as his starting point could not have been made otherwise. Nor beast nor bird nor butterfly, as such and in their respective spheres, could be improved. Perfection stamps every thought and action and purpose of God. To the question, "Why hast Thou made me thus?" there can be but one answer; it was the best that God could do. When God surveys all that He has made or done or spoken, He pronounces it "very good,"—the best, with the end in view, that infinite wis-

dom could devise or power execute or love contemplate. The works of the Lord, like His law, are perfect. Instead of there being an infinite number of possible ways open before God, there is ever but one way and that is not the good nor the better, but the best way. Even morally our world is as good as God has been able to make it. God, as God, must do His best and be so unchangeable in respect to His own perfections and the principles of His administration as to be without the "shadow of turning."

Such a God—choosing to be such—who would not adore? His character is the source of our hope, our joy and our confidence; our incentive to watchfulness, prayer, and fidelity; our encouragement to the practice of every virtue and the cultivation of every grace. If God be so unchangeable in His attributes and character that He must do for us always that which is the best that our circumstances will allow, then it follows that in His manifestations He is the most changeable, the most responsive being in the universe, every moment suiting His action toward us according to our changing conditions and relations. When we turn toward Him, He turns toward us; when we are tempted, He is concerned; when we pray, He listens; when we strive, He assists; when we weep, He comforts. It becomes us, therefore, to come into

closest relation of loving obedience to God so that His best for us may not be punishment and pain, but pardon and purity and peace. This view renders superfluous any test, scientific or otherwise, of the value and efficacy of prayer.

2. *"If I take exception to anything in your Preface it is to: 'It was necessary for God to permit evil,' etc. I infer that you mean He could not prevent it."*—D. C. B.

You state my position correctly. While to permit implies the power to prevent, yet by the creation of free beings God to a limited extent surrenders that power. He cannot prevent the exercise of the creature's given power of freedom. He cannot prevent evil if the free agent chooses it. He may deny the right to choose it by forbidding it; He may attach to evil choice painful consequences and encourage the choice of good by loftiest motives, but beyond this on any principle of justice, He cannot go.

I make no distinctions in my conclusions between evils—physical or moral, original or consequential, parental or progenial. Stress is laid upon the fact that God uses evil of every kind and that He gives it such a ministry as justifies Him in the creation of free beings, under law, while foreseeing the full character

and extent of the evil which they would choose. Freedom does not necessitate evil choice, therefore God could create free beings, knowing that they would choose evil; knowing, also, that He could make good use of that evil. Now, having created such beings, God cannot prevent by the display of His almightiness the exercise of their given power. To do so would destroy their moral responsibility and His moral government.

Calvinism in some of its aspects has cast a baneful shadow over the theology of Christendom. Theologians have been frightened by the cry of "divided sovereignty." But the sovereign choice of the free agent has not been usurped. God has yielded it, and not only so, He has hedged it about with prohibitions and penalties and limited it to the fullest degree consistent with perfect moral agency. Moreover, while He yields limited supremacy over the will, He retains absolute sovereignty over the resulting act, compelling the wrath of free creatures to praise Him.

So related and ordered are the zone of the creature's moral agency and the realm of God's moral sovereignty that any infringement of one upon the other is impossible. God cannot enter the zone of free agency with any compelling power over the will. Look at that first disobedience in Eden. The first Adam stood in the

presence of evil, unaided and alone. God saw the approach of the serpent, observed his insinuating address, heard His own command contradicted, realized fully the gradual yielding of Adam's will and what the result would be, yet gave no sign of His presence, no signal of warning, no outward or inward influence, to shape the fateful decision. Adam stood alone in that crisis as the second Adam, four thousand years later, stood alone in that dark hour when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

God saw the serpent of Satan possessed,
Approach mother Eve with exquisite grace;
He saw falsehood clothed with specious half-truths,
And knew the result, yet hid He His face.

Why? Because, having made our first parents perfect moral beings and given them perfect law for the government of their moral conduct —a law that was clear to their understanding and appealed to their conscience,—He could not interfere with their power of free choice; He must respect His own gift—free will.

Occasionally we hear someone say, "If I had God's power, I would not allow men to sin and wreck themselves and bring so much suffering upon the innocent." But God will exercise His power only in righteousness. He derives no pleasure from evil and does everything He can

to prevent it. Yet God must suffer evil in the event of its choice, in order to have moral creatures in His universe under a beneficent moral government. Still, evil must ever bow to the Divine prerogative of supreme moral sovereignty.

This view not only relieves God from every degree of responsibility for the existence of evil in the universe, but it removes the prevailing difficulties which have made it so hard, sometimes, to love Him. Calvinists have taught that "All is of God, ordained by Him." To the average mind this view makes God the author of evil. The view of Arminians is scarcely better, which is that God could, if He would, avert the evil and the anguish. It is impossible for the ordinary mind not to feel that this view makes God cruel.

I have a better faith. I believe that God, while He made me capable of evil, made me wisely, governs me kindly, loves me tenderly, and does the best He can for me even in circumstances for which He is not responsible; that if He cannot withhold me from choosing evil, He will overrule my evil for good, and that if He cannot remove the "thorn" from which I suffer, He will glorify Himself by giving me grace to bear it, and make it work out for me, under conditions which I can control, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In this faith His yoke is easy and His burden light.

3. "*'Is evil needful in the universe?' I answer, no; for God forbade it in advance. He would not forbid what was needful.*"—J. W. A.

I answer, no and yes. It is not necessary, as a fact, undeniably, absolutely. If it were, God would be responsible for it; nor could He forbid it, for it could not be prevented.

Evil is absolutely necessary as a possibility to free moral agents. It is absolutely necessary as a possibility where good is possible. As a possibility evil is eternal. As a fact evil is temporal. For the eternal possibility of evil God is responsible. For the temporal fact of evil the free moral creature is responsible.

Evil as a fact is needful conditionally. It is needful in order to obtain certain ends or results, as tools are necessary to profitable labor, or clothing to greatest comfort, or schools and teachers to higher education. No one should deny, I think, that evil is needful in order to show us God in the transcendently beautiful side of His character. Evil was necessary in order that Christ might come. True, God forbade it in advance, for the law must conform to the normal and the perfect.

You are familiar with maple sugar making.

Well, the magnificent maple tree might have stood on the hillside in the beauty of unmarred perfection and the world remained ignorant of the sweetness of its sap, had not some woodsman wounded it with a blow of his keen-edged ax. But from that wound there flows in profusion its very life to nourish and regale even the one who gave the cruel stroke. To obtain the delicious sugar, however, the wound was needful.

So God might have occupied His throne as Creator and Lawgiver, displaying the evidences of His wisdom and power on every hand, and the world never have known Him in the tenderness of His nature, had not our first parents in Eden wounded Him by their disobedience. But from that wound has poured the sweetness of His love and His very life, sufficient for the nourishment and regalement not only of Adam and Eve, but of every member of their sin-continuing race. Yet for this manifestation of the heart of God the introduction of evil was needful.

4. "*Man's will can 'countervail' His will.*"—L. D. W.

The word "countervail" has been carefully chosen. It means to offset, to counterbalance, to oppose with equal power. Man can disobey God's will, but if he can oppose it successfully, he is therein the equal of God. The finite will

never can oppose with equal power the Infinite will. The power, not the right, to oppose the Divine will is God-given. When Pilate said to Jesus, "Knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee and have power to crucify Thee?" Jesus answered him, "Thou wouldst have no power against Me except it were given thee from above." God could not confer a power superior to His own and He would not confer a power equal to His own. He would not render possible His own defeat by such generous equipment of His creature.

Moreover, God's will is not so pivoted that the completed human act of disobedience can void the far reaching Divine purpose. That by which man intends to thwart God's plan often becomes the means of its speedier fulfillment. The act committed, man is done with it; but it is then that God begins with it. The act committed passes from the limited zone of man's freedom to the unlimited realm of Divine sovereignty. God is not dependent on man's fidelity for the accomplishment of His purposes. Man does not work God's will. God works His own will. He who sees the end from the beginning; who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens and turns the seasons round; whose moral administration involves Him in no difficulties, and who cannot be surprised or disappointed or defeated, works His own per-

fect will, and so instead of its being countervailed in any instance, in the end it is always accomplished. Read the second Psalm. "The nations rage, the peoples make vain plans, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed; He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

While there is much that is not according to God's will, yet nothing can defeat His will. Time is an important element in the struggle between right and wrong, but the issue is not doubtful.

5. "*I seriously question the truth of your lines:*

'All evil, bounded, God compels
To swell His praise through earth and skies.'"

—S. J. M.

It is, indeed, difficult to see how the meanness and wickedness of men can be made to swell God's praise. But God permits evil, for we see it all about us. God overrules evil, for it is among the "all things" that work together for good to them that love Him. God limits evil, for unlimited evil would destroy His moral government. In permitting and limiting evil, God has a purpose and all God's purposes are high and worthy. Now in limiting evil, where

will He draw the line? Will He limit it to what He can control, or will He let it get the best of Him? The question answers itself.

Apropos of the limiting of evil is the following passage in "*Titus Andronicus*," which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Aaron, the Moor:—

> "I am no baby, I, that with base prayers
> I should repent the evils I have done;
> Ten thousand, worse than ever yet I did,
> Would I perform if I might have my will."

As the Rev. Joseph Cook observes: "It is certainly significant that Shakespeare, who has given us the most complete science of the human passions ever written, should teach that men are not permitted to do all that they would of evil."

We may add, if men are limited, so is Satan. Indeed, we have one notable instance of Satan's limitations. When God first delivered Job into Satan's hands for trial, Satan could touch Job's possessions, but not his person. In the second trial he could touch Job's person, but not his life. The psalmist says (Psalms 76: 10): "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, O Lord, and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain." If these words mean anything, they teach that God will allow no more evil than He can overrule for good. In

restraining what He cannot use and in using what He permits, His name is honored in earth and skies.

6. *"Did not man really know the power of good before the fall?"*—S. J. M.

In Genesis 3:22 we read: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." I doubt if God ever says anything superfluous, much less misleading. He would not say good AND evil if He meant only evil.

The Infinite One knows absolutely, while our knowledge is largely by comparison, as hard and soft, wet and dry, sweet and sour, light and shade, rich and poor, high and low, near and distant, and, also, good and evil. We really know not the one until we know the other.

Experience, also, is a source of our knowledge, and man in experiencing the fall did not lose his God-likeness, as many teach, but enhanced it in one respect, at least, viz., "to know good and evil."

7. *"I cannot believe that the fall of Adam was into 'clearer light' or 'greater strength.'"*
—S. J. M.

In reading the verses which speak of the fall as being advantageous in respect to light and

strength, it is necessary to connect the lines preceding:

> "To human fall is closely joined
> Love's intervention all divine."

It is because of love's intervention, which includes the curse pronounced upon man, that Adam's fall was into clearer light and greater strength. Love's intervention did more than merely to make good the loss involved by the fall of our first parents. Whether every fall since Adam's has been a fall upward, I do not know. It cannot be denied that men may profit by their faults and failures if they will. Tennyson's lines are no less true than they are beautiful:

> "I hold it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

I believe that all evil, whether of sin or sorrow, has its ministry, either positive or possible. We may not be able always to discern the divine service which weakness and wickedness are compelled to render, but may we not trace enough to establish the fact? Does not the indifference of the heartless priest and Levite magnify the tender humanity of the good Samaritan? Does not the prodigal teach us a lesson of our heavenly Father's

mercy? Is not Peter's denial of Christ made a blessing to the Church through all time, as it was the occasion of defining in the clearest manner possible the work of a faithful and efficient minister? Would we have had some of the most precious truths contained in the gospel but for the narrow bigotry of scribe and Pharisee? Do we not love Jesus better for not having where to lay His head than if He had reposed on pillows of down in the palace of a king? If the woman had not been taken in adultery, we should not have heard His tender words: "Neither do I condemn thee." If His enemies had not nailed Him to the cross, we should not hear falling from His lips those words of infinite sweetness: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

St. Paul found such meaning and blessing in the "thorn in his flesh" that he came to glory in his infirmities, and Christians ever since, because of it, have trusted God more fully for grace to bear each his own peculiar trial.

That which is base, as well as that which is noble, comes to us in blessing by the power and word of God. There are angels that climb up to us from below as well as those that descend upon us from above.

8. *"Was Eden's 'enervating bower' fit to be pronounced 'very good'?"*—J. W. A.

There is no doubt that Eden's bower was perfectly suited to Adam and Eve for the brief time which God well knew they would occupy it, and, therefore, very good. If it was not enervating before the fall, it would certainly prove so afterward, and God mercifully drove them out of it. We now develop strength by enduring hardness, nor can we conceive of ease as developing either brawn or brain.

9. *"You say, 'Man's fall was forward into hope.' Are the unfallen angels hopeless? I never fall into an old cellar that I may secure the hope of getting out."*—J. W. A.

Yet you must admit that having fallen into an old cellar, your hope becomes more active and you become more conscious of its reality. That our first parents in Eden had the hope faculty there is no doubt; but was there scope for its exercise? Notwithstanding the fact that the paradise of Adam and Eve was an earthly one, there is no reason to think that they were at all dissatisfied with it. They had the stream, the foliage, the birds, the balmy air, and the soft blue sky. They had no use for raiment, and they ate their food without work or weariness. Evidently they were contented, knowing nothing of hope that stimulates to effort for the betterment of conditions.

Probably the unfallen angels, if there are

such, are not, strictly speaking, without hope. "Which things the angels desire to look into," would indicate that they hope for more extensive knowledge. They also may hope for the good of the human race, for they know about us and our needs. But hope, as we understand it, would seem to belong to an imperfect state. Whether it is increased or diminished by fruition may be a question, but "Hope that is seen is not hope," and the angels with God, in whose presence is fullness of joy, are satisfied.

10. "'*Fair Modesty therein finds birth.*' *Are not all holy beings modest?*"—J. W. A.

Well, it cannot be supposed that they are immodest. Before the fall, Adam and Eve "were both naked and were not ashamed." Immediately after the fall "their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they made for themselves aprons of fig leaves." There was then the birth of something new in this world, which I call modesty. Holy beings are neither modest nor immodest, as we understand the term. They are neither bold nor timid, forward nor shy, obtrusive nor reserved, but preserve the happy medium. I refer to the modesty that is the offspring of conscious limitations, that is born of a sense of weakness or ignorance or, as in Adam's case, of guilt. In one of his sermons the Rev. F.

W. Robertson says: "Modesty is seldom the attribute of the untried. Modesty is a thing we learn generally by shame and failure." Surely holy beings are not modest in the Robertsonian sense.

11. "*I question that the first pair in their innocence were unconscious of sex; that, made capable of reproduction, they had no use for that capacity; that one of the results of sin should be pain in childbirth if there was not intended to be painless childbirth in the sinless state.*"—J. W. A.

This criticism, embodying the popular belief on this point, seems plausible but is not unanswerable.

Presumably Adam and Eve from the beginning had eyebrows, but they had no use for those hirsute arches until the curse compelled them to eat their bread by the sweat of their face. If man had one thing that he had no use for in his innocence, he may have had other things and faculties.

When those two disciples, Cleopas and his companion, were joined by Christ on their way to Emmaus, until He became a guest in their home "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." So the consciousness of Adam and Eve in relation to some of their bodily functions may have been held from them

for a time, and held in love, as were the eyes of the two disciples.

Everyone possesses faculties that are dormant and unrealized until occasion calls them forth. How often men awake to self-knowledge and astonish both themselves and the community by their power. Is it likely that our first parents were at once fully and clearly aware of all their physical and mental capabilities? Is it not far more probable that they came to the consciousness of their faculties gradually and as necessity called them into exercise?

Prior to the fall there had been no desire for parentage. After the fall and after God had driven our first parents from the garden of Eden, we read: "Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bare a son." Would God have said that if Adam had known Eve in the same sense before? Again, after the fall and after banishment from Eden, God said to the woman, as a part of His curse upon her: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband." Would God have said that if her desire had been so in Eden?

Our view is confirmed by Romans 11:32: "For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all." It is the most important verse in a very remarkable chapter. Those who sympathize with our

critic (and they include Bible students generally) on account of their fundamental error in relation to the propagation of the race before the fall, have given to that verse either no interpretation or a very feeble one. Do we not see in that verse that God, who foresaw man's fall, withheld from our first parents the desire of any expression of their reproductive faculties, and even held them unconscious of those faculties, until such a time as their fall would become a voluntary act and fact? How many ways has God of shutting up all unto disobedience? He has only one way, and that is by shutting them up to be the offspring of voluntarily disobedient first parents. Any other way would make God responsible for the disobedience committed, while now every man's moral act is a free act for which he is accountable. And God has only one way that we know about of showing the mercy of salvation to all, which is by the equal application to all of the atonement of Jesus Christ, "who died once for all."

In view of this interpretation, how pertinent the exclamation of the apostle that immediately follows, unaccountable on any other theory, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding ut."

But why pain in childbirth? You assume that it is one of the results of sin, but that is only an assumption. I answer that it is simply and solely because God said: "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." True, He could not say it before the fall, but in view of our welfare it was necessary for Him to say it after the fall if He would continue the race. The reason underlying it is not difficult to discover. Just as the ground was cursed, not for man's sin, but for man's sake; not for his punishment, but for his development; so pain should attend childbirth for the same reason,—not as the payment of a penalty, but for the perfection of virtues. As cost and estimated value are closely related, so the act of bringing a child into the world through pain would make it a serious and solemn thing, and would ensure for the child in its long period of helplessness the tender love and the unwearied sacrifices which its condition should demand. A curse so laden with blessing both to parent and child is worthy of our God.

In Eve's "Farewell to Paradise," Milton, with the exquisite touches of Fancy's pencil, represents Eve as leaving all the attractions of Eden with comparative tranquillity except her nuptial bower which she had beautified with garlands formed and placed by her own hands. But error may be made to appear in array as

beautiful as the garb of truth. Indeed, truth is not dependent upon its vesture.

Oh, it is so hard to get away from the prejudices imbibed from our childhood. We are so in the habit of looking upon the elements of the curse which followed the fall as being altogether penal that we lose sight of the fact that they contain less of hurt than of healing.

12. *"If 'like simple child he disobeyed,' was Adam responsible?"*—S. J. M.

We do not treat a child who understands our commands as irresponsible when disobedient to them. The command alone makes disobedience wrong and the disobedient guilty and subject to just correction. Adam had the command, which he understood. The accompanying threat of death in case he disobeyed could have no special deterrent effect, for he knew nothing of death, never having seen it. It could mean little more to him than the threat of a whipping would mean to a child who had never seen or felt any kind of punishment. And yet, as law implies a penalty, it was necessary to state the penalty which infraction of the law would incur.

It may be pertinent to add in this connection that such disobedience not only receives but deserves mercy, without detracting from grace, to the extent to which the creature limitations

may plead. When I think of man in Eden as God's child, with powers of perception limited, with capacity for enjoyment or suffering almost unlimited, and of the palliating circumstances attending his sin, I think I can see that such conditions should create in the loving heart of God a sense of obligation such as He has implanted in me toward my disobedient child, —the feeling that it is my duty as a parent to do all in my power to bring about reconciliation and a mutual relation of love and loyalty. I cannot say, therefore, what often I have heard said, that God was under no obligation to provide salvation for fallen man on conditions within his power to meet. I do not affirm that God was under such obligation, but I do know that love compels, that limitations plead, that creation implies responsibility, and that parental and filial relations impose solemn and unceasing obligations. From the death penalty, incurred as Adam incurred it, it seems to me that not only mercy but justice required some measure of relief if relief were possible.

13 "'*A higher type of man He wills.*' *A different type, I admit; is the reformed drunkard a higher type than the abstainer?*"

—J. W. A.

No, the reformed drunkard is not a higher type of man than the abstainer; but the well

born, well bred, virtuous, God fearing, hope inspired man of to-day is a higher type than the man in Eden who fell before his first temptation. Adam had innocence and so has the sweet babe that lies in the cradle; but God's man now has virtue, which is goodness under trial. Adam was obedient when it was easier to be so than otherwise; but God's man now is obedient from choice in the face of temptation. Adam had love, but it was weak compared with that loyal, tested love which binds the believing heart to God through long years and still cries out: "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides Thee." The Christian, the man whose faculties are all developed, yet directed and controlled, is the highest type of man.

Having created us with varied capabilities, God would develop and perfect them. Having given to us the faculty of love, He would call it forth in expressions unknown and impossible in Eden. He would call this faculty into exercise in expressions of sympathy, compassion, and pity. This can be done by virtue of the curse which God pronounced upon man. In a word, it can be done through the discipline of suffering. Even Christ, who came into the world on moral equality with Adam, was "made perfect through suffering." Either these

words are meaningless or the faultless Son of God received, as "the man of sorrows," some higher consciousness, some additional qualification, some increase of light, or a more sympathetic relation to humanity, that made Him a higher type of High Priest and Savior than He otherwise could have been. And God would bring us through suffering into fellowship with Christ's suffering. He would have us partakers of Christ's character—"grace for grace." There is possible, therefore, in this world a nobler manhood than Eden knew. If the sinless second Adam received benefit from suffering, then He became, to the extent of the benefit thereby secured, superior to the sinless first Adam in pure but painless Eden. It is our privilege to bear the likeness, not of the first, but of the second Adam.

14. "*I must protest against the doctrine expressed in the words:*

'Slight is the hurt, the blessing great,
Of all who toil beneath the curse.'

There can be no comparison between the curse and the blessing. The coming of sin into the world is an irreparable calamity. Our world is poorer and heaven will be poorer because there is forever the stain of sin upon the great white throne. All the palliating things which

may be spoken will not efface the fact that God's universe without the curse upon it made necessary by the fall would have possessed a luster of which we can never so much as dream. . . . The glory of God will always be less because of the human choice of evil. Had mankind been always good, God's glory in the end would have been immeasurably greater. . . .

" 'High noon's estate and heaven's pure bliss!' are indeed priceless heritages, but it is impossible to think that they would not be dim glories beside the joys which would have grown out of 'Eden's bower' had man been true to the higher destiny which God would have given him. . . . The benefits which may accrue to men through the existence of evil can never in all eternity equal the sum total of curse. . . . To the man who has felt upon his soul the stain of sin, heaven itself will be a state of modified happiness. To such a man, there is an infinite tragedy in the fact that 'through sin's dark portals Jesus comes,' and the good which He brings in His bloody train, indispensable as it is to sinful men, is purchased at an unnecessary cost and is less than would have accrued to men had there been no sin. . . . My conception is that in creating such a world as this one, God had regard to the end. Rather than deprive a race of finite beings whom He might create, of the blessings of fellowship with Him-

self, even though He foresees the certain disaster and must be satisfied with a second best world, God permits even the fall and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and the final universe wherein there is darkness forever for a part of His race, for by so doing He gives eternal life to some, and this, even under the modified light of such a heaven, is better than no life at all for any."—G. W. O.

My brother, I appreciate your full and frank criticism of one of the central doctrines of my poem. You will pardon me if I find exceptional pleasure in attempting to answer it. I like its ring of positiveness. Where others question, you dissent. Instead of expressing doubt of my view, you state clearly your own opposite view. It is all the more interesting since it reflects, as you tell me, the teaching which you received at the seminary, which I know to be one of the leading theological schools of a great Church.

The view which you have so well expressed I once entertained, but the more I tried to defend it the less firmly I held it. At length I gave it up altogether. I found many reasons urging a radical change of opinion. The poem contains some of them. It justifies God in making evil possible by the creation of free beings because He foresaw that He could make good use of evil in the event of its existence.

That, I think, is a better justification than yours—that "eternal life for some, with darkness forever for many, is better than no life at all for any." Your view places God on the losing side in a serious struggle.

The poem shows that the curse that follows the introduction of evil into the world is for man's "sake"; that is, the curse in all its features and effects in man's condition outside of Eden is a blessing. Instead of saying that the curse which God pronounced upon the race was "made necessary by the fall," I should say that it was necessary to make it possible for God to continue the race, and to continue it in hope, after the fall. And this is a most important distinction. It helps to solve, indeed it solves, the so-called "mystery of suffering." Your view makes the common ills of life penal; infants are treated as sinners because they suffer.

The curse, involving toil, pain, death, and their attendant sorrows, as we know them, is in no sense or degree the punishment of Adam's sin or of our sin. The penalty which our first parents incurred was not suspended but executed. Christ, as the second Adam, suffered the punishment of the first Adam's sin. But for love's intervention the race would have ended then and there. We have no relation to the original law given to Adam nor to its penalty.

In defining the ordinary sufferings of life as the "natural consequences of sin," the theologians are in error. It is not difficult to see that the eating of the forbidden fruit on the part of Adam could not cause the earth, as a natural consequence, to bring forth "thorns and thistles." A violation of the moral law could not so affect the physical world. But in view of the purpose of God in continuing the race in the consciousness of His love and favor, He transformed the character of universal nature. As the doom of the serpent was not a natural consequence of sin but by the direct word and power of God, so the curse of toil, pain, and death pronounced upon man did not arise naturally from his disobedience but came by the arbitrary pronouncement of Jehovah. Every tear or trial which I am called to suffer in infancy or age, proclaims the love of my heavenly Father. The sweat of toil, the pains of motherhood, the sorrows of infancy, the infirmities of years, and the pangs of dissolution are a part of the so-called curse made possible by man's sin, found necessary for man's sake.

The sense of guilt, the feeling of condemnation, and the fear of punishment are natural consequences of sin; but they are no part of the curse pronounced after the fall and have no connection with the common ills of life, which none, whatever their goodness, can

escape. The curse made proper by man's first sin, ushered in, under new conditions and laws no longer arbitrary as in the Garden of Eden, the present administration of God in this world. It was prompted by infinite wisdom and justice and love alike. When it shall have served its purpose, it shall pass away, as did the former, and ultimately the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" shall appear. But for the present the hostile forces in nature, the opposing wills of men and of devils, and all the sufferings which we experience in common with each other are made to minister to our improvement and highest development.

Whatever the creeds may contain or the schools may impart, the poem teaches, as does the Bible, that God makes evil His own and His human creature's servant; that the evil which He cannot overrule to His praise He restrains; that evil is made to contribute to man's knowledge, strength, and hope; that it is made the occasion of the birth of modesty, genius, and the desire for the propagation of the race; that it is made the basis of the highest type of character and the loftiest expression of love; and, above all, that it is made the occasion of the coming of our Lord—the sublimest possible manifestation and revelation of God to His universe.

To confirm more fully our teaching, although truth when seen in its relations is so self-evidencing that it needs no oath and little argument, your attention is called to a few considerations not contained in the poem.

It is impossible for me to look upon God with any feeling of pity, or compassion, or commiseration, which your view would seem to make necessary. My nature demands a God who cannot be defeated or surprised or disappointed in the least degree. I could not worship as God a being whose glory I could tarnish or the luster of whose universe I could diminish. My view of God compels me to believe that His blessedness and glory, like His natural attributes and moral perfections, are infinite.

I cannot believe that God would or could create a being able to thwart or countervail His will. Turn your eyes to the incomparable splendor of a midnight sky,—worlds upon worlds, planets and suns and systems and constellations and clusters, range upon range, some of them fixed centers of astonishing magnificence, others swinging in their orbits and revolving upon their axles, all of them moving with mathematical precision throughout the ages and symbolizing the glory of God who is the central Sun of all. Behold Him, in His triune capacity, counseling over one further

and perhaps final creation and then couching His conclusion in the lofty words: "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." His purpose in such a creation, evidently, was not to obscure His glory, but to enhance it. It was not to diminish the luster of His universe, but to give it a higher purpose and to extend the sphere of its appreciation. It ought to be inconceivable that God, who sees the end from the beginning, would create a being, who by the exercise of given powers could place an ineradicable "stain upon the great white throne." God's throne was never whiter than it is now. The disobedience of a child cannot tarnish the parental escutcheon.

The history of Joseph is a most illuminating incident, illustrating God's overruling providence. It was when Jacob was blinded by his tears that he said: "All these things are against me." There is not a fact or a feature in the story of Joseph that God has not caused to reveal His goodness and glory to a degree beyond what we can conceive as possible under other and happier circumstances. The world is richer for the grievous incident of that early day. Now if God could take the quarrel of a patriarchal family and use it in all the details of its development for the enrichment of the race and the clearer revelation of Himself, could He not use the fall of Adam in all the

details of its development for the good of the universe and the fuller manifestation of His glory? And if He could thus use it, He surely would do so.

The Bible abundantly teaches that the world in its completed history must fulfill the purpose and pleasure of God in its creation. Even in his deepest sorrow Job was inspired to say of God: "But He is in one mind and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that he doeth." (Job 23:13.)

The psalmist, contemplating the glory of God, declared: "But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased." (Psalm 115:3.)

Through the mouth of His prophet Isaiah, God says: "My word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10.)

Nebuchadnezzar, after a most humiliating experience, his understanding having returned to him, worshiped the Most High, and exclaimed: "He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him—what doest thou." (Daniel 4:35.)

The apostle Paul says: "For our citizen-

ship is in Heaven from whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself." (Philippians 3:20, 21.)

These and numerous other passages like them do not sound as if God were defeated by "the human choice of evil" or that its introduction into the world is an "irreparable calamity" or that "God's glory and the luster of His universe are diminished" by the creature He has made, or that "He is compelled to be satisfied with a second-best world."

My dear critic, called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, the view which you present does not honor God, and whatever fails to honor Him is false. The gospel which you are commissioned to proclaim lacks nothing; it makes a man whole; it meets the world's need and meets it fully. Heaven will not be a state of "modified happiness." It will be as much superior to Eden and its possibilities as the heavens are higher than the earth, and man himself, in intellectual power and moral expansion, as much superior to man in Eden as a giant athlete is superior physically to one whose muscles are pulp and whose bones are gristle.

There have been rebellion and war in Heaven, but God's will is accomplished there. The prayer which our Lord gave to His disciples declares it and that prayer is not impossible of fulfillment here. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," is not given us to offer doubtfully but in faith. He who will not give His glory to another will not suffer it to be dimmed by another. Tragic, indeed, the coming of Christ and bloody His train, but in being "wounded for our transgressions," God's glory did not suffer, for "by His stripes we are healed."

In the joy of triumph over evil, in the blessings of a gracious overruling Providence, in the hope of a blissful immortality, and in the revelation of God's mercy in the face of Jesus Christ, whose suffering our SALVATION has made necessary, it is not unreasonable that we should bear some scars of our victorious conflict. But our hurt, figuratively speaking, is the ache of a bruised heel compared with the joy of crushing the serpent's head. Moreover, our hurt is for a moment, while our felicity is eternal. Listen to Paul (2 Corinthians 4: 8-18), "pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may

be manifested in our body. . . . Wherefore we faint not, . . . for our *light affliction*, which is for the *moment*, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an *eternal weight of glory*."

Brother, I submit that what you condemn in my poem Paul seems to commend. As between the somber colors of your plaint and the rainbow hues of Paul's picture, I cannot hesitate to choose.

I conclude this defense with the observation that the curse contained the first promise of the Savior. Therefore, I continue to sing:

"Slight is the hurt, the blessing great,
Of all who toil beneath the curse,
Which shines so gemmed with promise bright
It gilds with hope the universe."

15. "*On reading your lines:*

'If all were right and nothing wrong,
The softest heart would turn to stone,'

I thought, if they are true, what a stony-hearted place heaven must be, and what a stony-hearted being God must be."—S. J. M.

If I were to say that occasion is everything in love, while you would know that it is not strictly correct, still you would not dispute it. Occasion does not change one's nature, nor does it create the capacity for loving, but it is

so related to love's expression that without it love has little value. So of my lines,—while not literally, they are poetically true.

If we have the faculty of love we must have the objects of love. If in pity, compassion, and sacrifice, love finds its highest expressions, then there is required those things or conditions that call forth pity, compassion and sacrifice. It follows, therefore, that our first parents could neither have known nor developed love in its highest forms in Eden.

And what shall we say of God in this connection? From a part we know the whole; from the finite we get a conception of the infinite; to know God we study ourselves, made in His image and likeness. As He is love in the dominating quality of His character, it is the demand of His nature that there shall be beings to love, and He creates them. They, being "flesh," assaulted by temptation; "earthern vessels," frail, brittle, perishable, easily shattered, furnish the occasion for that highest demand of His nature—the infinite compassion, the infinite sacrifice, the gift of His only begotten Son.

The tendency and general effect of trouble is to soften the heart. The first serious illness of my eldest child at the age of eight years, was the occasion of the revelation, not only to him but to myself, of how much I loved him.

How impressive the refrain in the 107th Psalm, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses." Trouble does soften the heart. That is the rule. Now and then we seem to find an exception. Apparently Job's wife was one. That which should have softened her heart seems to have hardened it. If she had been what a wife always should be, Job would have found large compensation for his suffering in the richer displays of her love, and he would have said to her: "My dear, I had no reason to doubt your love in the years of our prosperity, but your heart was a stone then compared to what I have found it in this period of my sorrow; you have been touched with the feeling of my infirmities." All that my poem says about the occasions or means of softening the heart may be true and heaven not be a stony-hearted place, for heaven is cognizant of earth, and its inhabitants are those who have witnessed, experienced, and relieved poverty, weakness, and loneliness. It occurred to me that my line, "The softest heart would turn to stone," might be too strong, but remembering that God, in speaking to His prophet Ezekiel (35:26) in deliberate prose called the heart "stony," I concluded that in poetry it might be called, relatively and metaphorically, under certain conditions, stone.

I do not teach that a life of righteousness hardens the heart, but that the tears of sorrow soften it and awaken within it tenderness, sympathy, benevolence, compassion, pity, and sacrifice,—love in its highest possible expressions.

16. *"Is it true that,*

'We dare not choose, we do not know,
What cup to drink, what voice believe?'"

—S. J. M.

In 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14, Paul speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light." "Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light." So much for the uncertain voice.

Now, how about the cup? We have drank some cups (some experiences) that we have taken most reluctantly, simply because we had to take them, and afterwards have thanked God for them. On the other hand, we have found that the most coveted potions ever pressed to human lips have proved only a sweet poison whose effects have filled the future with regret.

The popular feeling on this point I think is expressed in the following fugitive lines:

"It ain't so far from right to wrong, the trail ain't
so hard to lose;
There's times I'd almost give my horse to know
which one to choose;
There ain't no signboards on the road to keep you
on the track.
Wrong's sometimes white as driven snow and right
looks awful black.

"I don't set up to be no judge of right and wrong
in men,
I've lost the trail sometimes myself—I may get
lost again;
And if I see some chap who looks as though he'd
gone astray,
I want to shove my hand in his an' help him find
the way."

17. *"Is it likely that there would be the absence of samples of repentant angels if God provided for their salvation?"*—J. W. A.

That angels, more or less of them, have fallen from their original pure estate and that God has left them in hopeless revolt is the almost universal belief of Christendom. This belief is never opposed and is seldom questioned. Such general agreement in a matter of so much importance should have a solid foundation. But has it any basis either in revelation or reason?

It is well to remember that the Bible was not

written for angels but for men, and is largely limited in its teaching to what most vitally concerns men. Therefore, samples of repentant angels or full and explicit statements concerning their redemption or repentance, would not be expected.

We may argue, however, redemption for angels from various considerations. First, from the fact that there is no conceivable advantage in their not being redeemed. Second, the view that God provided for the pardon and salvation of angels honors Him in the highest degree, and whatever honors God most is most likely to be true. Third, from the nature of God, revealed as delighting in mercy. Would He be likely to miss what would seem to be the best of all opportunities for displaying it?

Fourth, from the fact that He showed His mercy to man with a promptness which amounted to haste, which was in perfect harmony with His mercy-loving character.

Fifth, from His impartiality. His ways are represented as being equal. Angels and men being equally His creatures: why should He be supposed to pass by one and save the other? If partiality be a blemish in the character of an earthly parent, can it be a virtue in our Heavenly Father?

Sixth, from the fact that as finite beings, unable to see the full import of their acts or to

weigh the consequences of disobedience, angels deserved mercy to the extent to which their limitations might plead.

Seventh, from the absence of any reason why "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" could not save them. I would not like to doubt God's ability to redeem them, and conceding His ability, I could not doubt His willingness to do so.

Eighth, from the fact that the angels are "ministering spirits," rendering to each of us a tender and helpful service. (Hebrews 1:14.) May not the basis of this sympathetic relation be found in the fact that they have sinned, suffered, and been saved themselves?

Ninth, from the consideration shown to fallen angels, especially the chief of them, who had access to heaven and met with the "sons of God" on more than one occasion. His presence there was not rebuked. Indeed, God honored him with conversations upon a very important topic and indulged him in a way that was very painful to Job, involving the loss of his property, the death of his children, the reproach of his friends, and the keenest bodily suffering. It may be that God did not welcome him, but He permitted his approach, heard his charge and challenge, let down the bars of the hedge about Job (which Satan never could break through), and as the sequel shows, used him to

the advantage of sufferers to the end of time.

Tenth, from the words of Jesus (St. John 10: 16), "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." The Church has never found Christ's "other sheep." Oh, yes, her preachers and teachers have claimed to find them and have said, as if there could be no doubt about it, that Christ was addressing Jewish converts and that the other sheep were Gentiles. They forget that St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 12:13), "In one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free." They forget, also, that with reference to believers in their relation to Christ Paul says (Colossians 3:11), "There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman." Christ does not regard our outward distinctions, and to say that He referred to the Gentile world as His other sheep who should hear His voice would be no more true than to say that He referred to the as yet uncalled and unconverted Jews. As sheep all these human classes belong to this fold. Still He has "other sheep which are not of this fold." Who are they if they are not the fallen, yet redeemed, angels? This interpretation gives significance to one of the most beautiful portions of the teaching of

our Lord, rendered unworthy of Him and so worse than meaningless through the error that God passed by the angels to redeem man. That man, as is often claimed, will be able to touch a higher note in the heavenly song than angels can ever reach is altogether fanciful. Angels and men will sing the same song in sweet accord.

Eleventh, from Revelation 12:7-12: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, Now is come (in heaven) the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accuseth (hath accused) them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved their lives not—even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. (But) Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil is gone down unto you, having

great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."

There is nothing figurative in this language, nothing difficult to understand. No historical statement could be plainer or more definite. It is obscure only when seen through the mists of prejudice or misconception. If the victorious angels in heaven overcame Satan because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, then it follows that they overcame there, as we do here, and sustain the same relation to the Redeemer which we hold, belonging, as we do, to His redeemed flock.

It is evident that the greater portion of the angels, if not all of them, who fought against the dragon had known sin, had been redeemed by the sacrificial suffering of the Son of God, and by faith shown by faithfulness had accepted that sacrifice to their salvation; otherwise how could it be said of them as a whole that they overcame because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony? Throughout the universe, and forever, the conditions of salvation are the same and unalterable.

Twelfth, from the words of St. Paul (Ephesians, 3:14, 15), "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole (every) family in heaven and earth is named." No one can reasonably

deny that this passage may be given an interpretation consistent with the theory of angelic redemption. How beautiful the thought that every morally accountable creature in God's universe belongs to God's family, full provision having been made for all the members to form one household of faith, united in fellowship and called after one name.

Thirteenth, from various passages of Scripture, found especially in the Revelation of St. John the Divine, by means of which we are permitted to look as through windows into the completed fold and to see of whom it is composed. We find there the Savior and the saved, men and angels engaged without a discordant note in the same worship, the redeemed giving ascriptions of praise to the Redeemer.

We do not wish to deny that the unfallen angels, if there are such, may be forever associated with the redeemed as Christ Himself is associated with them. They could be included provisionally in the redemption of fallen angels, as the later provision of mercy to men extends to the unborn and to infants.

It may be thought by some that this subject has no importance to us that is either essential or practical. But is it nothing to know that Christ died not only for me, but for sinners everywhere? Is it nothing to be able to interpret consistently portions of Scripture

generally considered difficult to understand? Is it nothing to honor God in the highest degree possible to our conception? Is it nothing that in Christ angels and men are united by the strongest of all bonds in one vast and precious brotherhood? Indeed, the subject is invested with the highest interests of the kingdom of God—its complete triumph among men, angels, and moral beings everywhere, its infinite and everlasting glory in every portion of God's boundless universe.

18. "*Does not the fact of life being under law imply probation?*"—J. C.

Yes, in the sense of trying, testing, and proving; in its application to novitiates; as we see it in Church, state, school and home; and, in some measure, in connection with the divine administration. Being under law implies probations rather than probation.

It is the theological probation—the one, single, temporal, all-determining probation as taught by the Church—that I regard as a myth. By "life forever under law" I mean that man (and all other moral creatures) will be forever under God's moral discipline or government. That government implies a Supreme Lawgiver, capable subjects, and perfect law. The subjects must have understanding, conscience, and free will. The law, to be per-

fect, must be appropriate, intelligible, and present influencing motives. These elements are essential to God's moral administration, and where any one of them is lacking there cannot be ideal moral government. Young children, idiots, and lunatics, not having the understanding to perceive the rule of conduct or the conscience to feel its obligations, are not able to obey it and, therefore, are not its subjects. Now if beyond the grave there is to be a continuation of moral government, it must retain its essential elements, carrying there, as it does here, hope and opportunity to its subjects.

I have been taught from my boyhood that the offer of divine grace is limited to this life; that here is my only day of trial; that my choice in this single stage—this brief moment of my existence—is final and must determine my eternal destiny for weal or woe; that a failure now is a failure without remedy or relief forever. The theological probation terminates at, often before, death, when if I have not chosen wisely, however brief may have been the period of my accountability, irrespective of my temperament, environment, or faulty training, the law under which I live and by virtue of which I have hope will execute its irrevocable sentence, cutting me off forever from all possibility of virtue or hope

of benefit to be derived from the clear view of truth which shall come when the veil of the flesh and the present accidents of my being are taken away.

From such teaching my soul revolts. I believe that it contradicts reason, lacks the confirmation of Scripture, and libels the character of God. As an accountable being, I am under a beneficent moral government, having hopeful opportunity. This is true of me here. Moral being, moral government, hopeful opportunity, are logically related. Now is there any evidence that I shall not be a moral being under moral government in the world to come? Then there, as here, opportunity must complete the trinity. If I am to remain forever under law, it follows as the shadow follows the substance that I must be able to keep that law—let us hope better there than here, being free, perhaps, from bodily infirmities and prejudicial conditions.

So far as we know, there is nothing in death than can destroy or change any faculty of the soul. It loses nothing, either in its character or powers, in its passage through the portals into the beyond. It is true of the soul's casket, and true of only that part of us, that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave." The eye loses its vision, the foot its swiftness, and the hand

its cunning. Any other or more extended application of this text is a perversion of its meaning. The soul retains its knowledge, its activities, its intellectual and moral perceptions, its moral sense, and its powers of improvement and progress. The fact of life being forever under law implies, not probation as theologically understood, but eternal hope and boundless privilege.

But I am told that eternal hope is impossible; that hope is founded on reasonable expectation of fulfillment; that if it is impossible to realize the thing looked for, it is not hope, and if it is realized, it is then no longer hope but reality. Well, all this may be true of commodities, but not of character. You may have your fill of money but not of morals. Hope is a faculty of the living soul, as indestructible as the soul itself. While it constantly realizes, it continually anticipates the perfection which, being infinite, can never be compassed.

Do you say that our first parents in Eden were under law and yet on probation? True, they were under law and on such a probation as I have admitted, but not such as I have described as the theological probation. They might eat of all the trees in the garden except one; partaking of that, they should surely die. To vindicate His law God sent His Son

in their humanity and He died that they might not die. Their existence was continued, and driven out of Eden, they were not deprived of hope and promise and possibility.

19. *"I cannot get away from the thought that if Adam's fall was upward and forward, then every transgression of God's command must in its nature be the same."*—P. A. C.

"If 'from evil gain,' it is not best to be always good. Too good? If, on the whole, it was better for Adam to disobey than to obey, why not for us all?"—J. W. A.

Either I have carelessly written my poem or my critics have not carefully read it.

Adam's disobedience was not in itself a blessing. No disobedience of God's command can be "in its nature" upward or forward. Sin in the abstract is always friendless. But better than Adam is Christ, and conformity to His likeness is the loftiest character. The righteousness which is of faith transcends the righteousness which is of the law. The revelation of hope in Christ and of heirship with Christ and of the immortality brought to light in the gospel are more than the law of works could ever reveal. And these are ours because God made man's sin the occasion of their provision.

I teach no more than Paul, nor differently from him, when he says (Romans 5:20), "Where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly"; and the conclusion which he draws is the very opposite of that which my critics seem to think is logical. "Shall we continue in sin, therefore, that grace may abound? God forbid." (Romans 6:1.)

20. *"The closing verses of your poem are very agreeable, presenting as they do the complete victory of good over evil. But does that victory signify the actual salvation of every moral being in God's universe? I hope it does. While I am not inclined to oppose the pleasing view, I am not able, at present, to adopt it."* —G. T.

My brother, fully appreciating your delicately expressed criticism, your superior scholarship, and the modesty characteristic of scholarship, I will state some of the reasons why I firmly believe in the ultimate destruction of all evil by the complete subjection of all evildoers.

This is the only way of ending evil in God's universe, except by annihilation, which has no foundation either in science or revelation. It is not by the subjugation of evil doers (as is often taught), which leaves evil, though inactive, still existing, but by their subjection.

Complete subjection is in the Bible; forcible subjugation is not there. There is a broad distinction between "subjection" as the term is used in the Scripture, and "subjugation" as we understand it. The subjected are so willingly; the subjugated are so unwillingly. The subjected are so by their full consent; the subjugated are so against their consent. The subjected are voluntarily submissive; the subjugated are sullenly rebellious. God brings moral creatures into glorious subjection to Him; He does not eternally subjugate them. He does not conquer by the exercise of superior force. He has servants, but no slaves. He has victors through Him, but no victims under Him. Eloquent as the thought may seem to be, God never puts His foot on the neck of an evildoer as a giant might suppress a weak and fallen foe. God subjects His enemies by instruction, discipline, training, influence, persuasion, constraint, and restraint. He "destroys" His enemies by causing them, through the use of these means, without coercion, to put away their enmity and become His friends.

Hell, no less than heaven, is a moral necessity. Virtue and vice must produce their logical results. These results are not arbitrary, but consequential. Men suffer hell here, and they will suffer it hereafter. Men

enjoy heaven here and they will enjoy it hereafter. Harmony with God brings bliss. Opposition to God brings woe. This is true here and will be in all worlds. Heaven and hell, therefore, are not so much localities as conditions, though they may be spoken of as we speak of places. God's law is a stern reality and it is the demand of a righteous moral government that its sanctions shall be executed.

But does a righteous administration demand the endless and hopeless torment of the sinner dying in his sins, with no possibility of repentance and pardon beyond the grave? As the curse which was pronounced upon man after his fall was not an expression of God's vindictiveness, but for man's sake, so is everything that is related to the curse. It follows that temptation, trial, suffering, punishment, and hell are all elements in God's redemptive plan. Each has a lofty purpose—a purpose worthy of our God.

God uses means for the salvation of the sinner here; may He not use means for the same end hereafter? Punishment, or chastisement, is used as a means of salvation in this age; may it not be used for the same purpose in some other age or ages? In the administration of an infinitely good Being punishment cannot be vengeful; it must be beneficent. If the law of God is given for the moral creature's good

("the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ"), then its penalty cannot defeat its object, which it would do if punishment were endless and hopeless.

Those who hold that the wicked who leave this world unforgiven will be subjected to pronounced endless torture declare that "sin is an infinite evil." But how can an infinite quality belong to a finite act done by a finite being? The Commentator Barnes, in his notes on Job, 22:15, says: "There is no intelligible sense in which it can be said that sin is an infinite evil."

It is said frequently that the sinner becomes fixed in sin and incapable of repentance, even though otherwise repentance were possible. The fact and force of habit are admitted, but that any habit of the will can become fixed in this embryo life is an assumption without proof; indeed, it is preposterous. Those who discourse on the fixedness of character here as determining unalterable moral destiny hereafter should remember that even in Christian countries one third of the people die before they have passed far into a state of moral accountability, when there can be no possibility of a fixed habit of any kind.

Every man who goes out of this world, to whatever place or condition, carries with him all the faculties which he possesses here. He will have his will, which will be free. He will

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retain his powers of faith and hope and love. Annihilate any one of these faculties or render any one inoperative by taking away its objects, and a different being is punished there from the one that sinned here.

Admit that this little province of God's boundless empire is in revolt; that it is "the place of Satan's seat"; it is plainly seen that God does not abandon and leave it in the hands of a usurper. It is His world still, and to redeem it He has given the costliest ransom of which He was capable. Does not this infinite outlay demand a complete recovery? The sacrifice must be justified by the end achieved. Moreover, if God, having done His best, fails, it will be because He has undertaken a task for which He is not equal or that there is a task not undertaken because beyond His ability. Neither horn of this dilemma could I possibly accept.

If death ends hope; if this life is a probation which terminates with our mortal breath; if the moral law, carrying with it the opportunity of obeying it and the hope of its rewards, continues not beyond the grave, then there is no escaping the conclusion that God's ways are not equal and that His effort to save men is a dismal failure. We see the strong oppressing the weak; some reveling in luxury all their days, others living and dying in abject pov-

erty; some scarcely ever knowing pain, others enduring lifelong suffering; some mentally endowed to read the rocks or harness the lightning or tell the distances of the stars, others to whose simple and feeble minds come no visions of beauty, no revelations of worth, no pleasing fancies, no gleams of hope; some born and reared amid delightful surroundings, blessed with freedom and nature and music and art, others existing in obscurity, pining in darkness, chained in dungeons—crawling, shrinking, shriveling things, a part of the putrefaction in which they lie and more wretched than the vermin by which they are slowly consumed. If this be the end or, worse still, the prelude to a deeper gloom, God cannot be acquitted of partiality.

Go into the slums of our large cities and see the multitudes who are born with the single talent of mere existence, with little of hope and less of opportunity. Their home is a dingy basement or a suffocating attic. They know nothing of the being and goodness of God. They never hear hymn or sermon or prayer. Their employment is in cellars and tubes and tunnels and mines. They seldom see clear sunlight and rarely breathe pure air. Their environment is their shroud. Their substance, their very existence, is given to those who already have ten talents. Bound hand and foot,

they are in outer darkness, and their self-uttered dirge, unheard, or heard indifferently by the rich and powerful, is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Millions on millions of our race have lived and died under such or worse conditions. There is no salvation except by "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," yet millions have died who never heard of Christ as a Savior. Must not the conditions of salvation be made known to them, some time, somewhere, with the privilege of accepting them? They yet live. Where are they? What is their condition? Are they given knowledge and yet denied hope and opportunity? What shall be their destiny? Truly, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all creatures the most miserable."

But this earth life of ours is only a punctuation point of a sentence of a paragraph of a page of a chapter of a volume of a series in the limitless sphere of our existence. God's moral administration must continue. Hope must survive the grave. The inequalities of the present must be explained and righted if mercy and justice are the foundation of God's throne.

Why God suffered John to be beheaded and Stephen stoned and Cranmer burned while faithfully engaged in His service, and their murderers to be applauded and honored, will

yet be fully understood and approved. Why Paul—when he was Saul of Tarsus and while he was yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the humble followers of our Lord, nor sought nor wished additional or different light—was favored with a manifestation of the Savior approaching the glory of His appearing which we shall behold beyond the grave, but as yet denied to all others will be fully explained and justified. God does not deal with His children unjustly. He uses men as He does events, subordinating all to the advancement of His kingdom and the revelation of Himself. The working out of God's plans are begun but not completed here. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." (St. John 13:7.)

The angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the "*eternal gospel*" to proclaim, does not at once preach it to all men everywhere. Centuries have passed and yet there are portions of the earth still dark and full of the habitations of cruelty. Shall the generations that have gone out from the darkness untaught never hear the "eternal gospel," never see the heavenly light, never taste celestial bliss?

It will not be because God is too good or because He loves His creatures too well to see them lost forever that they will be finally saved, but because some time, somewhere, they

will meet the conditions of salvation which His wisdom and justice and love impose. The final choice of every moral being in the universe, I believe, will be for God and righteousness.

When I find two classes of texts that seem to teach directly opposite doctrines, only one of which can be true, I adopt the class whose teaching appears so reasonable that it ought to be true, that is least likely to be the result of human bias or interpolation, and that has the strongest Scripture supports. I then try to find an interpretation of the other class that shall transform apparent antagonism into actual consistency. Such an interpretation can be given, but this reply will deal only with texts of the former class.

Isaiah (53:11), clearly beholding the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, declares: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Would He be satisfied in saving only a few? Would He be satisfied if *one* sinner for whose salvation He had suffered were eternally lost? Much less would He be satisfied if the vast majority of those whose redemption He had purchased with His blood were to plunge into a hopeless hell, as Mayflies into flame.

God Himself, in Isaiah 45:22, 23, says: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.

By Myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." What virtue in homage rendered, or victory in homage secured, if it is not given voluntarily? What shall every one swear to God if not allegiance? By that oath all become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, loyal subjects of the King of kings. Some time, before death or afterward; somewhere, this side of the grave or beyond it, God's word sworn by Himself must be fulfilled.

The apostle Paul (Romans 14:11), quotes Isaiah 45:23 almost verbatim: "As I live, saith the Lord, to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God." And we are not left in any doubt as to the character of the worship which is here declared, for Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians (2:9, 10, 11), quotes with some elaboration the same facts: "Wherefore, also, God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name which is above every name, that *in the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things on the earth, and things under the earth, and that *every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" We submit that to bow in the name of Jesus and to confess Christ to the glory of God, means not coerced but voluntary surrender.

In 1 Corinthians 15:21-28 we read: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at His coming. (When that shall be we have not been told.) Then cometh the end (not the end of all things, but the end of Christ's mediatorial reign), when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have abolished all (opposing) rule and all (antagonistic) authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet. (Not in the sense of subjugating but of subjecting them.) The last enemy (last because He can use it longest) that shall be abolished (because impersonal) is death. For He hath put all things in (voluntary) subjection under His feet; but when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be *All in all.*" Observe that the Son is subjected to the Father. He must become so voluntarily or willingly. Christ's enemies are subjected to Him. Their subjection must be of the same kind and in the

same voluntary or willing manner, for the word "subjected" is used in each case, the same word not only in our translation but in the original Greek. With the sinner means are used, but they produce loving surrender. All the severity which so many see in Christ's putting His enemies under His feet disappears before this simple and plain interpretation. What has Christ been doing in the past? He has been putting His enemies under His feet; that is, bringing them into willing subjection to Himself. What is Christ doing now? He is putting His enemies under His feet, bringing them into willing subjection to Himself. And He will continue this work, as He has hitherto prosecuted it, not by force, but by the word of truth, the influence of the Spirit, the constraint of love, the ministry of evil, the exercise of moral government, and by the revelation of Himself, until every enemy shall be brought into voluntary subjection to His will except death, which shall be destroyed when, perfectly satisfied with the travail of His soul, He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father that God may be All in all. Then, and not till then, when His triumph is complete, will His mediatorial reign cease.

We call attention to 1 Peter 3:18, 19, which reads: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that

He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which aforetime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." Prejudice and preconceived opinions often give to some portions of God's word a forced and inconsistent interpretation. The passage under consideration seems to be one of them, although it contains nothing abstruse or difficult. Its statements are plain, simple, and direct. Why should we teach as its meaning, that at the time when Noah was preaching to the ear of the antediluvians, Christ in spirit was preaching to their spirits, which are *now* in prison? Yet this absurd interpretation is the one that generally obtains. Is not the plain meaning of the passage this—that Christ, between His death and resurrection went in spirit to the place of the departed spirits of the antediluvians, disobedient in the days of Noah, and preached to them salvation? He could tell them of the fulfillment of the promise and of His finished sacrifice on Calvary for the conditional salvation of the whole world. What haste He manifested. He did not wait even for His resurrection to inform those souls of their glorious privilege. Let us have the true meaning of God's word,

even if it shatters our creeds and confirms the idea held by Alford and others of "a day of grace in Hades." A day of grace should be welcome anywhere, and if it can end, that fact should be the saddest in all the realm of truth. As the Bible, however, is given us for this life, it does not emphasize the possibilities of the future life. All its emphasis is placed most properly on the present—not present life, but the present moment. "Behold *now* (not to-morrow or next year) is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." Yet some will wait, and come and find to-morrow, when the morrow becomes the now. But delay means difficulty, if not doom; loss, if not to be lost.

If it be said that the preaching to the "spirits in prison" proves nothing concerning an offer of grace to the dead in general, we point to another statement of Peter (I Peter 4:6) that is not limited and does not exclude the idea of totality. "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." This passage has been the despair of theologians obsessed with the idea that there is no offer of grace beyond the narrow boundary of this present life. Surely it seems to be obvious that only the preaching of the gospel beyond the grave can compensate the defects and inequalities of

the present or give to God's judgment of mankind the character of equality and righteousness.

Consider 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

We are all children of God by creation, preservation, and redemption. The Israelites, turning to idols, were backsliding *children.* The prodigal of the parable was a prodigal *son.* Therefore when John says: "Now are we children of God," we think that he meant, or might have meant, whether churched or unchurched, baptized or not, believers or infidels. When, continuing, he says: "And it is not yet made manifest what we shall be," we think that those words may be equally true of all classes. He admits that to believers, at least, there will come a change in the moral character, if not in moral relation, beyond the grave. If a change can occur in believers after death, why not in unbelievers, at least to the extent of their becoming believers, and, if so, of entitling them to all the benefits to which believers are eligible.

The difference in men here in respect to moral character is only in degree. The best are not altogether good and the worst are not altogether bad. If the best, being imperfect,

need and will have a true and transforming view of the Savior, why should such a vision be denied to those who need it most? Would there be such varying types of moral character among believers if all saw Christ with equal clearness? Would not the number of believers be very largely increased if all men saw Christ with the clearness with which some behold Him? For example, would not the vision which was given to Saul of Tarsus produce a similar effect in others to that which was produced in him? Indeed, was it not the most sublime purpose of that heavenly vision, to which Saul was not disobedient and to which probably no man so favored would be disobedient, to emphasize the truth that all men will be like Christ when they come to really and truly behold Him?

When John says: "We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," I can find no reason for limiting it to a mere fraction of those of whom Christ is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto Him and live." If when Christ shall be manifested, one class shall see Him as He is, shall not the other class, also, see Him as He is? If that revelation and vision shall make one imperfect class perfect, may it not have the same effect on the other imperfect class?

Millions upon millions of our race have lived

and died without ever having seen or even heard of Christ. They must see Him,—every eye shall see Him, even they who pierced Him,—and shall their vision of Him who gave Himself a ransom for all be without effect?

Isaiah says (45:24), "And all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed." That shame implies the desire for Christ's likeness. No moral change can come to any man, here or hereafter, against his volition. Those who are now incensed against Him shall long to be like Him when they shall see Him in the fullness of His splendor. When Christ shall appear we—all of us, without distinction—shall see Him as He is; we shall behold the King in His beauty, and that beauty shall astonish and attract us; it shall transfix our gaze and transform our soul.

For full confirmation of this view read the 110th Psalm, which surely includes Christ's enemies and contains the clear notes of Messianic triumph. "Ruling in the midst of His enemies, Christ shall stretch forth the rod of His strength and they shall become His footstool, offering themselves willingly in the beauties of holiness, in the day of His power." All days are days of Christ's power, but that will be *the* day of His power when, according to John, He shall be clearly manifested. Then all shall become willingly His footstool, offering

themselves in the beauty of unreserved surrender. They shall be like Him, for beholding His glory, not as now through a glass darkly, but clearly, face to face, they shall be changed into ever ascending degrees of glory by the still operative law of assimilation and the transforming energy of the Almighty Spirit.

And Satan, also, is to be manifested. "The man of sin to be revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) is not the Jews as a people, or Titus, or Caligula, or the Pope, or some representative of Satan yet to come, but Satan himself, whom "Christ will bring to naught by the manifestation of His presence." We do not see Satan now as he is, but he shall yet be revealed in all the repulsiveness of his real character. And when we see him, we shall be astonished and dismayed, and turn from him with inexpressible abhorrence. We shall be ashamed that ever we rendered him any service. But when we see the Lord Jesus in the glory of His Father, we shall be ashamed that we have not served Him with all our heart. It is often said that without holiness no man shall see God, as if holiness were essential to the sight. The reverse is true,—the sight, or the revelation of God, being essential to our holiness. It is morally impossible to see God without becoming holy. "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him." "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

This implies that the divine manifestation is first in order. Saul of Tarsus, without holiness, yet favored with a manifestation of Jesus, became holy and the Savior's most valiant champion, as he, above all others, had received the clearest vision. "No man hath (clearly) seen God at any time." But we shall see Him; we shall all see Him; we shall see him with a clearness of which the vision of Paul was only the hint and harbinger; we shall see Him as He is, and the sight will be so transforming that we shall be "changed into the same image." We shall be like Him.

In Romans (8) the apostle Paul, personifying creation, represents it as unwillingly submitting to the curse with which it was smitten for man's sake and impatiently waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, so mysteriously are its destinies linked with man's destiny. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us . . . who groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption." There is not a beast in the field or forest, not a bird in the air above us, not a fish in the sea beneath us, not a feature or particle or element in nature that has not been affected by the transactions connected with Eden. But "creation was subjected to vanity in the hope that creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage

of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." As the whole creation was made to suffer on account of man after his fall, it shall be restored to its primeval perfection on man's complete restoration to the likeness of God. John, on the isle of Patmos, was blessed with a vision of the full, perfect, and universal deliverance from sin and the curse, not only of angels and of men, but of material creation itself. "And I saw and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever." (Revelation 5:11-14.) John's vision shall become reality. Creation does not groan and travail in vain. There shall be new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,—no thunderbolt of wrath within the sky; no tornado on the land or tempest on the sea; no fiery volcano or de-

structive earthquake; no poisonous reptile or ravenous beast of prey; no seed of thorn or thistle in the ground; no wevil in the kernel, or rust on the stock, or mildew in the bin; no pest to annoy, or pain to bear, or death to fear. The fair morning of the sinless universe shall be surpassed by the unclouded splendor of the culminating day. The worship and service of God shall employ every creature and prevail everywhere throughout the universe. Then there will be no devil; there will be no hell; there will be no discordant note in the universal anthem of praise ascending to God and the Lamb. I am glad that the apostle is so particular in mentioning every conceivable place, and in embracing and emphasizing by repetition, every inhabitant thereof, for it must follow that there is no location of despair and no despair to locate.

To an unbiased mind, unbiased by creeds and the teachings received from childhood, the Bible, though often colored by the bias of translators, abounds in confirmation of the views here presented. I stand by the old Book, correctly translated and rightly interpreted, from the first word of Genesis to the final Amen of the Apocalypse. Read without prejudice, it relieves the perplexity which is so often and deeply felt concerning the inequalites of life,

and justifies, without mystery, God's moral government of the world.

Those who believe that "everlasting" means without end when applied to future punishment, should be consistent enough to concede that it means as much when applied to the gospel. The everlasting gospel implies everlasting hope. The gospel and the punishment will last while need requires. All will hold, however, that "He who knows his Master's will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

It may be well to add a special word in relation to the final surrender of Satan to God. If God redeemed the fallen angels, as we believe, Satan is included, for he is one of them. There is nothing absurd in the thought that sometime Satan will surrender to Him whose authority is absolute and to whose supremacy he is compelled ever to yield. Even Milton, representing Satan in hell in the midst of his standard bearer and lords in chief, pictures him with deep scars upon his face, care upon his faded cheek, and signs of remorse in his cruel eye.

"He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had not yet lost
All her original brightness; nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess

Of glory obscured; . . . but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek; . . . cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse."

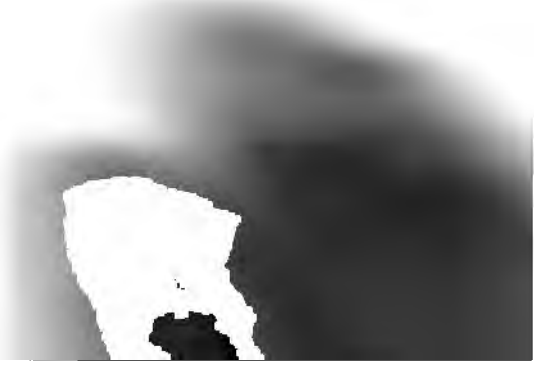
That is poetry, but it is the expression of one who entertained no thought of Satan's salvation. It is something, however, that Milton pictures him as showing signs of remorse. The apostle James says: "The devils believe and shudder." If that be true of them now, the time may come when they shall believe and surrender.

That Satan will sometime cease his active opposition to God, either voluntarily or involuntarily, no one can doubt. He has no possessions, no kingdom, and no authority. His record of failure must be disappointing to himself. As one has said: "He works now, not with the vigorous inspiration of hope, but with the frantic energies of despair." He led the angels in their revolt, not to victory but to defeat. He tempted man to his fall, but God interposed and made that fall a blessing. He tempted Christ in the wilderness, but Christ proved Himself the victorious Captain of all the warrior host of God. He sorely afflicted and expected to overcome Job, but Job overcame him. He thought he was doing a fine thing when he got Joseph sold into Egypt and the three Hebrew children cast into the fiery

furnace and Daniel into the den of lions and John Bunyan into Bedford jail, but soon he saw his purpose foiled, and he has been sorry ever since if at the present time he is capable of repentance or regret. It may be that since his banishment from heaven his opportunities are suspended for a season, for while he is very active here, he is said to be reserved in chains under darkness until a day of which God knows everything, but of which we know nothing. It may be that during the present dispensation he is so bound in darkness and given to evil and separated from God that he is incapable of repentance, but sometime he will humbly bow and confess to God "in the name of Jesus the Christ" and "to the glory of God the Father." My conception may be wrong, but it seems to me that God's highest glory demands it.

Does evil ever win the victory? Does it not always, in the end, go down in defeat? When Zophar said to Job that "the triumphing of the wicked is short," he told the truth, although he made a mistake in classing Job with the wicked. A short triumphing always spells defeat. When God shall be "All in All" the consummation will be realized. But forever the conditions of salvation will be the same and unalterable. Jesus, now and evermore, is the door of the sinner's hope and destiny.

A STUDY OF THE FUTURE LIFE



A STUDY OF THE FUTURE LIFE

A preacher had given his people a sermon on heaven. Mrs. M., a member of his flock, returned to her home quite unprofited, saying that she did not go to church to hear speculations upon what no one knows anything about. She believed in heaven as a blessed fact and was content to leave her future life with Him who is the Lord of her present life. There are many Mrs. M.'s in the world.

Another preacher discoursed on the activities of heaven. A worn, weary, overworked woman listened and derived no comfort. She returned to her home to pursue her incessant toil, saying that she wanted a future life in which she could sit down and take a good, long, undisturbed rest. There are many such who, having never missed a stroke in the world's strong current that has set against them, hope to end life's tiresome voyage in a haven of complete repose.

There are others who think of the future life as bringing *reward* for unappreciated and uncompensated service, or *reunion* with loved ones beyond the possibility of separation, or that *clear intellectual vision* which solves all prob-

lems and providences and explains all mysteries. With many who have deeply drunk the cup of sorrow, the only thought of the future life is that it will be *happy*, filled with beauty and brightness and fragrance and melody and joy, —no tears, no sorrows there. There are some who dismiss the subject of the future life by saying that it will be enough for them to be with Christ, or that they will be satisfied when they wake in His likeness.

Dr. Dick has gone so far as to say that he believes that hereafter we shall go from planet to planet as we now go from house to house. To those here who are not content to stay long in any one place, who are filled with what is called the "wanderlust," a life "on the wing" would be all that their heart could crave. Such are the varied notions concerning the future life; and such, also, is the indifference regarding a rational view of the great hereafter.

No philosophy of the future life has ever been written and possibly one never can be written. A study of it, however, may be made interesting and even profitable, for there is scarcely any other subject concerning which so many absurd and stupid notions prevail.

The fact of the future life may be assumed. It is the universal hope and expectation of humanity, and, as one has said, a universal human quality is the assurance of a universal

reality. Moreover, man's immortality is brought to light in the Scriptures.

One other fact may be equally assumed,—namely, the possibility of man's constant improvement and development. Created with mental and moral powers in the image of God, surrounded with opportunities for calling these powers into exercise, and endowed with immortality, man is stamped with the law of unlimited progress. When we lose sight of the fact that this world is an omnipotently governed and omnisciently taught school, the grand purpose of which is human development, that moment life is a maze, man is a mystery, evil is a riddle, God's government an enigma, and the universe itself one vast, unsolvable problem; but with this fact in view, progress becomes a large word, teeming with importance and written in letters so plain that even he who runs may spell them out.

The conditions of our future life and the methods of our progress there cannot be assumed, and therefore they challenge our careful study.

We understand quite clearly the means of our development here, but we have very vague notions of the conditions and methods of our progress hereafter. We believe that God never changes the principles of His administration, yet we fail to apply those principles, as we have

learned them, to the life that is to come. We know that reasoning from what has been to what will be is a correct method of inference, especially in relation to God, yet we limit the application of our conclusions to this present state. If our development is God's supreme thought concerning us in this world, it must be supposed that our progress will ever be included in His plans and that the conditions of our future advancement will bear some resemblance to those which now obtain.

Upon resemblances, not upon possibilities, are founded opinions, theories, philosophies, which command our faith. Even if some degree of speculation attaches to them, they may still hold the mind in persuasion of their truth. When, however, there is added to resemblances the basis of Scripture in its most rational interpretation, and the theory itself reflects beauty upon our life, upon the universe significance, and upon God honor, all of which is true in relation to our present study, it bears the seal of divine sanction and the conviction of its value is irresistible.

In Genesis 2:7 we read: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This verse is quoted as it stands, both in the Authorized and Revised Versions, and there is no intimation

that it reads differently in any other translation. The word translated "life," however, should be rendered "lives," for that is its literal meaning and is admitted to be so by all biblical scholars, but the translators, believing in life immortal for the inbreathed part of man and not knowing what to do with "lives," have purposely mistranslated the word, making it express a single life when it should express plurality.

God breathed into the nostrils of the body which He had formed from the dust of the ground the breath of *lives;* and *man,* combining the material and the spiritual, man as a whole, body and mind, became one living soul. What does this mean? It must have a meaning and a meaning which we ought to know.

Its meaning must be, not abundance of life (a construction sometimes given to the Hebrew plural), in which case it would be as true of the prolific lower animals as of man, but a living soul, presenting a succession of unlike bodies; a single life continued through many separate and consecutive lives; a man, or living soul, finding his discipline and development and preserving his immortality through an indefinite succession of different yet related bodies, each new body being a resurrection of the preceding body. It is the continuity of complex man through a succession of different human

organisms, each organism being a more refined and delicate vehicle than its predecessor, and the period of the continuance of each, probably ever lengthening, being properly termed a life.

Why do I say *bodies?* Because the Bible teaches bodily resurrection, and because a body and the inbreathed spirit are equally essential in constituting the "living soul." Neither the body nor the spirit operates apart from the other. The two elements in union constitute the man.

Why do I say *human* bodies? Because we must always belong to the human race, however diverse our bodily forms may be.

Why do I say unlimited *succession* of bodies? Because God's word, "breath of lives," is indefinite as to number.

Why do I say each body more *refined and delicate* than its predecessor? Because in each succeeding life the man, or living soul, has a higher, sublimer, and more spiritual purpose to fulfill than was possible under the conditions of the former life.

To illustrate this definition of man in his infinite progress and to show that my interpretation of the word "lives" is not absurd but highly probable, attention is called to some of the creatures which are much lower than ourselves in the scale of being.

We all know that a caterpillar, probably a resurrection of the moth, becomes in its resurrection a butterfly, and that the life principle in one is the permanent living element in all. One living being continues in unlike bodies through distinct lives, in separate realms. It is a strange yet instructive transformation. The clumsy and repulsive worm, crawling on the earth and feeding from the dust, at length weaves its own shroud, from which it soon emerges winged and beautiful, flying in the air and nourished by the nectar of leaf and bud and flower. Will it have yet other and higher forms of existence in still loftier realms? We do not know, but our ignorance is no proof that it will not.

There is a sluggish grub that rambles among the water plants and shows a fondness for the deep and shaded bottom of the pool. The time comes, however, when turning away from its companions and familiar haunts, it finds the stalk of some reed or rush which it slowly climbs to sunlight and air; there, with a shudder, it drops its body back to its former home and, as the dragon fly, spreads its four gauzy wings and soars away, the creature of a new and higher realm. The one living soul passes by resurrection from a lower form of life to another that is higher, and it can no more return to its former world than it can to its

former mode of being. Its companions see the old body, having legs with which it crawled, and perhaps bury it from their sight, but they do not see the new or resurrected body having wings with which to fly.

In the progressive life of what we come to know as the frog, by evolution rather than by resurrection we find three clearly distinct lives and two widely separated worlds. In the first life of the frog it appears as a small dark speck in a mass of white jelly that floats upon the surface of the pond. Gradually that speck, or egg, absorbs into its enlarging pulpy form the glutinous bed in which it rests. When this process is completed the spawn life of the frog ends and its polliwog existence begins. Now it breathes through gills, like a fish, and has a tail by which it sculls its way about the pond in search of food. Its only element or world is water. At length, however, the gills give place to lungs, the tail is absorbed in legs and its polliwog stage has come to an end. It now enjoys a still larger life, where it propels itself in the water by means of its legs or with them climbs the banks, where it hops in the grass, or sits upon a log, basking in the rays of the summer sun. It has become an inhabitant by turns of two worlds, the world of water and the world of air and dry land.

Thus we see even in these lowest creatures a

single life not only continued, but developed, through different lives in ascending forms, no life, in any one of them, having any resemblance to the other life or lives. We see, also, that in every case the body, or form of existence, is perfectly adapted to its conditions, and that the conditions always serve the purpose of higher progress.

While not germane to my central thought, yet I am constrained to ask, have these lowly creatures reached their limit, or will they ascend still higher, through additional transitions? A categorical answer cannot be given to this question. But the God who made man, made them, and He made them for man, whose nature requires them for observation, study, and improvement. Will man's nature so change that he will not need, hereafter, diverse forms of life below him as well as varied orders of life above him, all adapted to his wants and to their conditions? They can be advanced to other worlds and in other worlds, as they have been advanced from one element to another in this world. There should be no call, it seems, for new and original creations to meet the wants of man's nature, when God has shown us that even here a caterpillar may become a butterfly. It may be that God will promote from lower to higher stages the creatures which we have found helpful to our progress in this world, that in our

advance from life to life in worlds to come we may have their presence and influence forever.

Ever since Adam and Eve, every living soul of our race has had one life, an embryo existence, prior to this present life. The living soul of our former life is the living soul of the present life and will be of all our future lives. This life, while it is a continuation of our former life, is yet distinct and separate from it, and our next life will be a continuation of this and of our former life and still be distinct and separate from either.

Our transit from our former life was our birth, or resurrection, into this larger and better life; and our departure from this life will be our birth, or resurrection, into another life of ampler opportunities and transcending possibilities. Thenceforth, ascending from life to life, each painless birth or resurrection, will be a grand promotion, while the body will undergo such changes as shall adapt it always to its new conditions.

Our first life of a few months' duration answered its purpose; this life of a few years' duration accomplishes its higher object; the next life will achieve its still sublimer end; so will the next and the next and the following, in unlimited succession.

It was necessary that our former life should end in order to secure the advantages of this

present larger life; this, too, must end as an essential condition of the higher thought and loftier action of the life to come; that, also, must end for the same purpose, and so the living soul, to realize infinite progress, must move out and on and up, in successive human embodiments, by new births or resurrections forever.

This does not imply, however, that the tears of separation and the pangs of dissolution are to be feared and felt hereafter. The partialities of the present and the pains which they occasion, being based upon physical functions and relations, are peculiar to this procreative state. Where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but all are as the angels of God, the bonds of our union will not depend upon earthly kinships or outward resemblances.

In its essentials only, will the living soul preserve permanence of identity or furnish the basis of enduring fellowship.

In our former embryo life we had all the faculties which we have now, or ever shall have, but how limited was their action and how unconscious we were of their possession. In our present life we have come into consciousness of many powers and have large opportunity for their exercise; yet such are the conditions in this world, the scope of their action and development is still limited. They reach out and find barriers which they cannot penetrate and

boundaries which they cannot pass. Like a bird encaged, we beat in vain the bars that enclose us. With Tennyson we cry betimes:—

"But what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry."

Our next life will extend, but by no means complete, the scope of the faculties we now use, and will awaken into consciousness faculties of which we now know nothing. While each successive life will enlarge the living soul's opportunities, it will also limit them according to the materiality or permissive character of our bodies. We shall remain finite creatures forever.

We have now come in our study, not through speculation, but by reason, resemblance, and revelation, to a mount of vision which commands a broad and bright horizon whose vaulted arch is studded with stars that flash a new and beautiful light. Questions that have puzzled scholars here find solution. Scriptures that have been misunderstood or regarded as obscure are now luminous. What are some of the things which we learn?

We learn that the living soul and our inbreathed spirit are not synonymous. Our translators of the Bible have erred in using

the words "soul" and "spirit" interchangeably. The former is the more comprehensive term for it includes the spirit and its essential body —the body which God is pleased to give in the successive stages of our development.

We learn that we shall enter into another life, as we entered into this life, by birth. I believe that Christ's words to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," express this great truth and do not refer to a change of heart or regeneration, as popularly understood. I believe that they declare, not a conditional moral requirement, but an unconditional necessity; and that they were as applicable to Christ Himself as they were to Nicodemus or as they are to us; for even He, the Son of God, in order to come into this world as a revelation of the Father, had to be born into it as we are born into it, and when He would return to the right hand of God, He had to die and rise—in other words, be born again—just as we must die and rise, or be born again, in order to go to the world in every way prepared for us and to the life for which we have fitted ourselves.

This application of Christ's words, controverting the teaching of the whole Christian world, should be, perhaps, more than merely stated. Note, therefore, that while John several times speaks of men as being spiritually begotten of God, he never refers to them as being

begotten again, or anew, of God. The birth of which John speaks stands in contrast with nothing. He uses the term very much as Paul uses it when in relation to the conversion of Onesimus, he says, "Whom I have begotten in my bonds"; or, as he again uses it when, writing to the Corinthians, he says, "For though you should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel"; or as Peter uses it when he speaks of God "who begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The term "birth" or "begotten" in relation to the work of spiritual regeneration is used in the Scripture in a purely symbolic sense; but the birth of which Christ speaks to Nicodemus is not symbolic but actual; it is as real and literal as our birth into this life, over against which it stands, and Nicodemus so understood it, as is evident from his question, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" If Nicodemus received a false impression in this respect, it is reasonable to suppose that Christ would have corrected it; on the contrary, he confirmed it by proceeding at once to indicate the nature of the birth declared, viz., that it was by spiritual and not by physical agencies. The two births are equally real and

stand in contrast to each other, each one the door of entrance to a life of the ever living soul.

The difficulty of Nicodemus had respect to the feebly hoped-for resurrection and future life. Job wrestled with the same problem when he asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The only answer which he could give was, "All the days of my warfare will I wait till my release comes." That would settle the question, though he yearned for a present and authoritative answer. And what was true of Job in this respect was equally true of the people in general. Christ, who knew what was in man, in every man, knew the difficulty of Nicodemus and of his class, and met it with the most beautiful, comprehensive, and illumining term ever applied to the great truths of the hereafter,—a term that explains death misnamed and dreaded, reveals the resurrection as positive and certain, and declares the most welcome fact in all the realm of truth—another life in another world. Indeed, in the words, "Ye must be born again," Jesus took Nicodemus to the gate of the tomb and wrote thereon what he and all the world might read: "The door of our birth into a brighter and larger life." Born into our present life, we must be born *again* to enter our next life. This application of Christ's words is not strained, but simple, natural, and logical.

We learn that there is no call for the gener-

ally supposed intermediate state; that there is no unconscious sleep, no purgatory, no jail where we await a formal trial, and no disembodied spirits looking for their laid-off caskets to be resurrected and returned. Our theologians talk of disembodied spirits, but there is no evidence of their existence. Professor E. A. Shafer of Edinburg University says: "We cannot conceive of life, in the scientific sense, as existing apart from matter."

We learn that the judgment which approval or condemnation awaits is a process—a present and continuous judgment; that all days are judgment days. True, we read, "After death the judgment"; but that judgment is not after the death of the whole human race; it follows the death of each individual and probably consists of our just and proper entrance into that particular world that can serve us best. But is not the last parable in Matthew (chapter 25) a picture of a single, final, general judgment? Being a parable, it is not to be literally interpreted. It may be a symbolic representation of the judgment that is searching, constant, and universal. It doubtless teaches the separation of the righteous and the wicked. But are not these classes separated now by virtue of their opposite characters? Will the righteous ever be more on Christ's right hand or the wicked be more on His left hand than they are at present?

It does not require the pronouncement of a judge to separate from each other the righteous and the unrighteous. The antipodal in character go their separate ways.

We learn what Paul means when he says: "This mortal must put on immortality." Our body is not immortal, but it puts on immortality while it still remains mortal. How can this be done? The process can be explained on our theory of a succession of births and an equal succession of lives. How does the wheat put on immortality? By periodic or frequent resurrections, exchanging old bodies for new ones. "That which is sown is not the body that shall be."

When a man, or the living soul, quits his present visible body, he quits it forever. He takes his new body from his dying body, for where there is no life there can be no resurrection. He takes his resurrection body in the moment of what we call dissolution here, for Death is birth and birth is resurrection. My present body is a resurrection out of the body or external wrapping which, no longer needed, was left behind when I was born into this present life; and so another body shall be a part of me in my next succeeding life, where this body would be as unsuitable as was the body of my embryo life for this present stage of my being. Thus, through an indefinite number of

new births, or resurrections, or successive lives, I shall put on the immortality, which the mortal part of the living soul requires.

This is the only conceivable way in which this mortal *can put on* immortality, for the resurrection of that which is mortal and material must still be mortal and material or it could not be a resurrection; and being so, it will become old, like the former body, and like it, also, will demand the youth of a new birth. How many resurrections of mortality immortality may require no one can tell. The body will become less gross with each renewal, and therefore the resurrections will become less frequent; but it is called "a spiritual body" not so much on account of its spirituality as because it is the result of spiritual, instead of physical, agencies.

It is possible that the "aura," which, by means of the Roentgen rays, scientists tell us they see departing from the body at the instant of death, is itself the faintly outlined expression of the living soul in the life that follows this terrestrial life.

It will be noted that our view, as here presented, is entirely free from such difficulties as are involved in the absurd theory that the resurrection is the reassembling, reclothing and revivifying of the dry bones and scattered dust of the world's graveyards. It will be noted,

also, that our view is analogous to what we see taking place in some of the lower creatures.

It is the *fact* of resurrection, not the manner of it, or time of it, or number of its occurrences, that the Bible clearly teaches.

We learn that Christ's second coming is a gradual and continuous manifestation and not a single, sudden, spectacular, and complete event. It began when Mary Magdalene saw Him through her tears,—the first to behold Him after His resurrection. It continued to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and to the eleven as they sat at meat in Galilee. His very parting from His brethren over against Bethany was an incident in His second coming, and the words then spoken, "Lo, I am with you always," have been, are now, and ever shall be true in their continuous fulfillment. Christ's second coming is a perpetual and an increasingly glorious advent. A blind man, after an operation to restore lost vision, is not permitted a full sunburst. Christ's manifestation to men is according to the power of their spiritual appreciation. Special manifestations there may be, as on the day of Pentecost, to Saul of Tarsus, and in the destruction of Jerusalem—the end of the Jewish state.

His second coming is not like His first—with scarred visage, wounded and bruised, and having no beauty that men should desire Him

—but attractive and winsome; He is the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley, the Fairest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. His second coming, unlike His first, is not in weakness, but in power. He comes not as a victim, but as the victor; not to make salvation possible, but to make it sure,—to perfect that which in His first coming He began. He comes to us, and to all who have lived in this and in all worlds, as the revelation of the glory of the Godhead. He comes as the light that illumines every man's path and that shineth "more and more unto the perfect day"; more and more, not only here, but hereafter, as we advance

> "From world to luminous world as far
> As the universe spreads its shining wall";

more and more as we ascend in our successive lives toward that central, mighty, metropolitan orb in which rises "the throne itself of God"; more and more unto "the perfect day" when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to Christ, to the glory of God the Father; more and more unto that crowning day, when all having been assimilated into the divine image by the clear vision of the Savior, His Kingdom shall be complete and God shall be ALL IN ALL. The record of eternity will be the progressive and transforming revelation of

God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son. I have no sympathy with the lines of Bonar:

"The Church has waited long
Her absent Lord to see,
And still in loneliness she waits,
A friendless stranger she.
Age after age has gone,
Sun after sun has set,
And still in weeds of widowhood,
She weeps a mourner yet."

God's children are not orphans. Christ's Church is not a widow, but a bride adorned and joyful. The Lord is ever present with His people. He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is in the midst of them who assemble in His name. The physical atmosphere does not more surely surround men than His arms enfold them. He is nearer to them than their breath in their body, for in Him they live and move and have their being. While vividly realizing His presence hovering over them and soothing them more than the caresses of a tender mother's love, there is ever a *moreness* in His coming; He may come more graciously, more gloriously, more triumphantly, and so men should not cease to pray,—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

We see much more from our mount of vision; more than we have time and space to name.

We see how the future may be a continuation of the present and not altogether out of harmony with it; how our service of God may be perpetuated in the service of His creatures—the only way in which we can serve Him; how the present laws of moral discipline and development may always obtain; how God may be our Father and Christ our Savior no less henceforth than now; how hope and love and opportunity may survive successive transitions; how the imperfectly begun web of our existence may yet be advanced toward completion that forever recedes; how the purposes that are broken off in this life may be consummated in a later life; how the blighted buds of this dull springtime of our existence may bloom in infinite beauty in the golden summers that are yet to be.

But where are we to pass our numberless and constantly expanding lives? Such lives, involving the material, require locality, habitation, distinct yet related, limited yet enlarging spheres of action. If we are able to find the possible places of habitation, their very existence tends to confirm the truth of our theory; indeed, the evidence altogether would seem sufficient to establish the theory as a doctrine. It is clear that we are passing the present life of our infinite series on one of the smaller planets of one of the minor solar systems—a

very appropriate starting point of a stupendous journey.

At the close of His last supper with His disciples, Jesus said to them in substance: Do not be anxious about the future; you believe in God fully, trust just as implicitly in Me. In my Father's house, that is, in the illimitable space which He occupies, are many mansions, numberless abiding places; if it were not so, I would have told you, such is its importance. I go, and you are grieved in view of My departure, but I go to prepare a place—not a permanent abode, not a final home, but a place —for you. The many mansions are for your many lives, which they imply. No matter which mansion I prepare for you first, or what the conditions of your discipline and development there may be, you can leave that to me, for I shall be there; where I am, you shall be also.

Surely no one would wish to take from, or add to, or misrepresent the gracious words of Jesus, as full of comfort as they are of instruction, and spoken to each one of us as really as to those entranced disciples who sat at His feet.

We now go out and look up to the starlit sky. What a scene of grandeur and magnificence invites our astonished gaze! And yet we see only the fringe of a universe that

stretches in every direction beyond the reach of human thought. Those brilliant orbs, worlds upon worlds, systems and constellations and clusters, that bejewel the infinite space, have *now* assumed a new and wondrous meaning. While they declare the glory of God and show His marvelous handiwork, while they are great lights hung out by the Almighty hand to illumine the realms of unlimited space, while they stir our amazement over the marvel and magnitude and miracle of creation, they yet speak a purpose more practical and precious; they are our celestial possessions, they are correlative to the lives which we are destined to live, they are mansions in our Father's house—abiding places for us, representing stages of progress in our march of immortality.

I am overcome with delight. My vision is as beautiful as an angel's dream. The maze and the haze that have obscured my view of the future are largely cleared away. Now I see why the mansions are many, why they vary in magnitude and splendor, why one star differs from another star in glory. Each one must answer to a distinct type of life, having its own definite adaptations and lofty purposes. The home must correspond to the life that shall there be lived. My line of three known lives is extended to many, as many as their possible habitations.

True, the whole created universe, having had a beginning, must have an end. When the planet on which we now live shall have served its high purpose, its very elements shall dissolve. Yonder sun shall yet exhaust its light and heat and pass away. There is not a star in the firmament that shall not become dim and dark. The far off Milky Way, breaking up into different parts, proclaims that it is not eternal. "The wreck of matter and the crash of worlds" is not mere poetry. Still we never shall be left mansionless. Our God has at His command unlimited creative power, and scientists tell us that new planets are constantly being born and that in the universe there are planets in all stages of development. When a world shall have fulfilled its sublime mission, it shall pass away and another world, more glorious and with loftier purpose, shall appear; and so Christ may say to us in our next life and in each of our succeeding lives, what He says to us in this life, "I go to prepare a place for you." Thus shall we have a "progressive revelation of God, given to us, as it were, in a series of concentric circles rising one above another toward their Source." Thus, also, we shall continue to see in God's visible creations the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and divinity.

I see, also, how progress is ever orderly,

under law, and by effort and discipline. I see, moreover, how not only Judas, but every man may go to "his own place," and how the consequences of good or evil conduct here may follow into the hereafter forever without there being a hopeless soul in all the universe of God.

Oh, the grandeur and blessedness of the Father's thought and plan and will concerning me,—for my infinite series of progressive lives an infinite succession of prepared worlds.

Eloquence may garland many themes, but not this one; it becomes mute in the soul-absorbing view of the ineffable splendors and floods of melody and divine unfoldings that shall glorify our ever brightening immortality.

Fancy may take its flight far beyond the ken of eye or telescope in the limitless dominions of God, but at last it must fold its wings in weariness and sink exhausted amidst the glories of immensity, crying: "*This is but the vestibule of His temple.*"

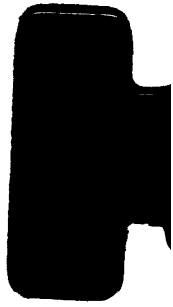
My Father's house, the universe,
Has mansions many—worlds of light
Full furnished for my separate lives
That rise in series infinite.

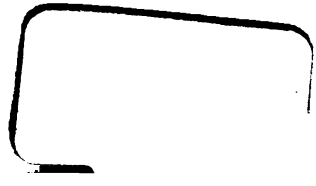
This mansion is a place prepared
Through countless years and ages vast;
Rocks, stars, and sunless depths reveal
God's thought of man through æons past.

And God still works, preparing homes
With lavish hand and purpose high.
In what bright orb shall I next dwell;
Which first call "home" in yonder sky?

Ah, what my term of schooling there?
And whither then shall I remove?
Still brighter spheres, still larger lives,
The progress of my soul shall prove.

And when I've traversed, one by one,
And dwelt in all the worlds I see,
Will then my progress have an end?
'Tis but begun: *ETERNITY.*





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